

7-2016

Hit the Floor Running: Assistant Principal Mentoring and Perceptions of Impact for Mentors and Proteges

Tony Stewart
Gardner-Webb University

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.gardner-webb.edu/education_etd



Part of the [Educational Leadership Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Stewart, Tony, "Hit the Floor Running: Assistant Principal Mentoring and Perceptions of Impact for Mentors and Proteges" (2016). *Education Dissertations and Projects*. 172.
https://digitalcommons.gardner-webb.edu/education_etd/172

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the School of Education at Digital Commons @ Gardner-Webb University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Education Dissertations and Projects by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Gardner-Webb University. For more information, please see [Copyright and Publishing Info](#).

Hit the Floor Running: Assistant Principal Mentoring and Perceptions of Impact for
Mentors and Protégés

By
Tony Stewart

A Dissertation Submitted to the
Gardner-Webb University School of Education
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Gardner-Webb University
2016

Approval Page

This dissertation was submitted by Tony Stewart under the direction of the persons listed below. It was submitted to the Gardner-Webb University School of Education and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Gardner-Webb University.

Kathi Gibson, Ph.D.
Committee Chair

Date

Jim Palermo, Ed.D.
Committee Member

Date

Fran Riddick, Ed.D.
Committee Member

Date

Jeffrey Rogers, Ph.D.
Dean of the Gayle Bolt Price School
of Graduate Studies

Date

Abstract

Hit the Floor Running: Assistant Principal Mentoring and Perceptions of Impact for Mentors and Protégés. Stewart, Tony, 2016: Dissertation, Gardner-Webb University, Mentoring/Assistant Principal Preparation/School Leadership Succession/Perceptual Study

This research study analyzed the assistant principal mentoring programs directed by two school districts located in the southeastern United States. Digital questionnaires as well as face-to-face focus groups and interviews were used to obtain the perception of impact for protégés and mentors engaged in formal mentoring relationships. Mixed methodology was utilized to collect data. The study found significant impact regarding mentoring interactions for protégés. Feeling encouraged and supported by their mentor, protégés also trusted the anonymity of their relationship. Other findings include strong value for protégés in the areas of leadership skills, acclimation, and confidence. Additionally, the research study identified positive impacts for mentors who engaged in formal mentoring. Participants reported a greater sense of personal satisfaction as well as increased leadership skills based on their mentoring experience. Challenges to mentoring also surfaced from the study. Both protégés and mentors discussed proximity and time as obstacles to engaging in the supportive relationship. Finally, the research identified unfavorable experiences in which protégés and mentors attributed to the matching process and personalities of their counterpart.

Dedication

To my family and friends at home and work, thank you for your guidance and constant encouragement to persevere. Among the many lessons I have learned through this experience, none have been more resonant than the power of grit.

Acknowledgements

Throughout my life, I have been fortunate to receive the unwavering support of my family. During every obstacle, both professionally and personally, they are here to help lift me up and show me that with every defeat, lessons can be learned. I truly feel these experiences have made the largest influence on who I am today. To my brother, dad, and mom—thank you for being the best family a guy could have. I love you.

My family, however, is not the only source of support in my life. Each day, I am reminded of how important positive relationships have been, and still are, in my career. I recognize this while reflecting on my teaching career, my transition to school administration, and most recently, my shift to central services. In each setting, I have found nurturing leadership, supportive colleagues, and an environment safe for me to fail forward. In my current role, working with exemplary district leadership, I have strengthened my confidence and improved my skillset and gain new knowledge each day through interactions with my current mentor, Dr. Fran Riddick. Dr. Riddick, the epitome of a mentor, recognizes the talents of her team, places them in the right seat, and pushes them toward excellence. For me, she realized potential I never imagined and has spent the last 4 years helping me to achieve it. Because of her supportive leadership, I was able to complete this doctoral program.

Finally, to the members of my doctoral committee—Dr. Kathi Gibson, Dr. Jim Palermo, and Dr. Fran Riddick—thank you for the countless hours of editing, encouragement, and invaluable advice you provided. Each of you helped make a formidable process more achievable and less unnerving. I am forever grateful.

Table of Contents

	Page
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Introduction	1
Significance of the Problem	3
Purpose of the Study	6
Research Questions	6
Definition of Terms	6
Conceptual Framework of Study	10
Conclusion	14
Chapter 2: Literature Review	16
Overview	16
Literature Review	16
Organizational Programs in which Support can be Found	34
Conclusion	39
Chapter 3: Methodology	40
Introduction	40
Research Design	41
Limitations of the Study	48
Delimitations	49
Research Validity	49
Conclusion	51
Chapter 4: Results	52
Introduction	52
Organization of Findings	54
District Demographics	55
Participants	55
Mentoring Program Characteristics	57
Data Collection	61
Results	62
Summary	85
Chapter 5: Discussion	86
Introduction	86
Discussion	87
Existing Research Alignment	96
Implications for Educational Practice	101
Study Limitations	103
Recommendations for Further Study	104
Summary	105
References	107
Appendices	
A District and Participant Consent Forms	119
B Participant Questionnaire Letter	126
C Protégé Survey Instruments	131
D Mentor Survey Instruments	137
E Mentor and Protégé Focus Group Questions	140
F Participant Structured Interview Items	143

G	IRB Approval.....	145
Tables		
1	Coaching and Mentoring Differences	31
2	Applications of Mentoring and Coaching.....	32
3	Protégé Participants.....	56
4	Qualitative Data Source and Participant Numbers	57
5	Districts' AP Mentoring Program Comparison	58
6	Mentoring Interaction Items.....	69
7	Perceptions of Preparedness Items.....	70
8	Identified Skills—Providing Professional Development	71
9	Identified Skills—Student Discipline	72
10	Identified Skills—Classroom Instruction	73
11	Identified Skills—Content Standards and Curriculum	74
12	Identified Skills—Parents and Community Members	75
13	Identified Skills—Staff	76
14	Identified Skills—Dynamics and/or Politics of District Leaders	77
Figures		
1	Conceptual Framework of the Study	14
2	Components of Personal and Professional Support	27
3	Massachusetts Department of Education Induction Design	35
4	Benefits of Onboarding.....	36
5	Qualitative and Quantitative Methodologies	46
6	Protégé Findings	63
7	Mentoring Perception Scores	78
8	Mentor Findings	79

Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

“Edification of some kind has existed since Homer’s Mentor advised Odysseus and thus lent his name to this very human activity” (Chartered Institute of Management Accountants [CIMA], 2002, p. 2). Mentoring, long considered an integral component of recruitment and retention as well as a major preparatory feature in the private and public sector, is not considered a novel concept. For decades, this approach has been seen as a realistic and manageable means to provide support and training for new employees (Hopkins-Thompson, 2000). “Mentoring [because of its] focus on the individual . . . tend[s] to be more long-term [and] capable of initiating a real change in behavior rather than just rhetoric about it” (CIMA, 2002, p. 5). Historically, corporate executives have recognized the importance of providing individual support for their up-and-coming leaders (Hamlin & Sage, 2011; Riddick, 2009). Within medical environments, decision makers utilize mentoring relationships through induction programs of their newly hired staff, understanding that the “mentorship does enable the development of competent practice, especially if it is founded on supportive longer-term mentor–mentee relationships” (Gopee, 2007, p. 21). Leaders in higher education also see the value and use similar programs in order to help novice staff and faculty acclimate to their new environment. “The evidence and critical need for faculty mentoring has longstanding support in higher education research” (Savage, Karp, & Logue, 2004, p. 3).

An examination of public schools reveals that a vast array of mentoring programs exists across the nation. In most cases, school districts implement beginning teacher programs that utilize mentoring to support novice teachers. “Schools can enhance the beneficial effects of strong initial preparation with strong induction and mentoring in the

first years of teaching” (Darling-Hammond, 2003, p. 5). Feiman-Nemser and Parker (1992) explained that for most,

the chance to mentor a new teacher addresses two serious problems in teaching: the abrupt and unsupported entry of novices into the field and the difficulty of keeping good, experienced teachers in the classroom. The provision of mentor teachers is considered a big improvement over the more typical “sink or swim” experience of many beginning teachers in the United States. (p. 3)

Many state education organizations such as North Carolina’s Department of Public Instruction require local education agencies to develop a beginning teacher support plan evaluating the district’s implementation of a formal mentoring program. Teacher Working Conditions Survey results for North Carolina suggest that a strong correlation exists between mentor support and improvements in the novice’s instructional practice, their impact on student learning, and their decision to continue teaching at the school (North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Initiative, 2014).

There is documented success for teacher mentoring; and with this in mind, district leaders in K-12 public school systems have begun to realize the potential for providing similar support to new assistant principals and principals. Mentoring has been seen as a realistic and manageable means to provide support and training for new employees (Hopkins-Thompson, 2000). In addition, “administrative mentoring programs are growing in attention due to the projected principal shortages, concerns about qualified candidates, and the changing role of the building level principal” (Remy, 2009, p. 1). Programs of this nature help foster and prepare future leadership in schools and at the district level.

As the education field continues to become increasingly complex and public

scrutiny of its impact on student achievement and preparation of 21st century learners intensifies, the need to cultivate quality and effective leadership in our schools has never been more critical. “School leaders and even education lawmakers readily acknowledge the value of recruiting and retaining high quality personnel” (Riddick, 2009, p. 134). Leading researchers often articulate that “leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school” (Leithwood, Seashore Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004, p. 5). Because many school systems look to their own personnel when leadership positions become available, a strong base of future leaders is critical to succession plans for the principalship (Riddick, 2009). Although principals, for many years, have received formalized support from their more-experienced peers, most school districts have neglected the position of the assistant principal, who has been expected to hit the floor running with little guidance. It has become increasingly more clear, however, that the need for such programs is justified (Battle, 2010).

Significance of the Problem

Although university graduate programs are designed to introduce students to educational leadership and prepare them for the work of an administrator, graduates are not truly equipped to handle or understand the intricacies and dynamics of the principalship.

Although . . . administrators felt prepared for their job tasks, many were not prepared for the reality of the job. Even those with field experience felt overwhelmed by the work load, the immediacy of issues, the constraints on their time, and the politics of the job. (Kraus, 1996, p. 12)

With the enormous growth seen in schools across the nation over the last several

years and an increasing rate of retirement for educational leaders (Hussar & Bailey, 2013), school districts understand the importance and need of filling positions with quality candidates (Riddick, 2009). Recognizing “a growing shortage of high-quality leaders in American schools has heightened interest in leadership development as a major reform strategy” (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr, & Cohen, 2007, p. 1).

Many district leaders also recognize the benefits of hiring from within the system and have implemented some type of succession plan, formal or otherwise, to assist in identifying and molding future leaders (Hargreaves, 2009). Districts also acknowledge that the preliminary stages of succession planning begin with teacher leaders and assistant principals. Having such a plan in place decreases the opportunity of a school district being “caught in a reactive crisis mode wherein they are forced to hire less-than-ideal personnel to fill openings” (Riddick, 2009, p. 1).

One common component of many succession plans includes a mentor program for new principals and/or assistant principals (Chapman, 2005; Margo, 2002; Riddick, 2009). A wide variety of programs exist, some more formal than others. For those districts implementing a formal, structured program, a large amount of time, energy, and additional resources are invested in order for quality support to be provided for new assistant principals. With little or no financial incentive or compensation made available, many mentors assume the responsibility simply to help nurture their newly hired colleagues. However, certain intangibles exist that potentially impact veteran assistant principals serving in this capacity. Currently, few research studies have been conducted in which the value for novice administrators who partake in a mentor-mentee relationship is detailed (Zellner et al., 2002). This relationship, however, may have identifiable effects on the veteran assistant principal as well (Alsbury & Hackman, 2006; Hamlin &

Sage, 2011). Additionally, little information has been described as it relates to the extent that this relationship might possibly impact the school district in a broader sense.

Evidence based on recent literature review suggests there is a great deal of research on mentoring relationships as they pertain to classroom teachers and principals (Alsbury & Hackman, 2006; Bloom, Castagna, & Warren, 2003; Malone, 2001; Zellner, Skrla, & Erlandson 2001), while little exists for that of the assistant principalship. Is value added to the school district when such programs are implemented formally? The purpose of this mixed-methodology research study was to determine the perception of value, if any, that existed for novice and veteran assistant principals who engaged in mentoring relationships.

As a result of the data collected and review of literature, the researcher broadened the scope of work relative to assistant principal mentoring programs. An examination of two school districts' formal assistant principal mentoring programs in the southeastern United States was conducted. School districts that had similar demographics were studied in order to maintain research validity. A survey consisting of open-ended questions and Likert scales was deployed in order to retrieve feedback on experiences from both novice and veteran assistant principals who engaged in this relationship. Additionally, individual interviews and focus groups were arranged based on survey responses. District leaders charged with overseeing these programs were also surveyed and interviewed. Data obtained were analyzed to determine if patterns and themes existed. As a result, information gleaned from this interpretive research study can assist other school districts in the development and implementation of effective assistant principal mentoring programs.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research study was to examine the perception of impact for mentors and protégés who participated in formal mentoring programs coordinated by their school district. Two Southeastern United States Local Education Agencies were used to study participants involved in mentoring relationships. The following research questions were designed to assist in the determination of perceived impact when participating in such supportive relationships.

Research Questions

1. What perception of value or impact exists for the protégé when participating in a formal assistant principal mentoring program?
 - a. How does the relationship between the mentor and mentee have the capacity to cause harm to the protégé?
 - b. What factors might affect the protégé's perception of a mentor-mentee relationship?
2. What perception of value or impact exists for the mentor participating in a formal assistant principal mentoring program?
 - a. How does the relationship between the mentor and mentee have the capacity to cause harm to the mentor?
 - b. What factors might affect the mentor's perception of a mentor-mentee relationship?

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this research study and to provide the reader with a clear understanding of terminology the following defined terms are provided.

Coaching. A supportive relationship in which a means to gain improvement in

performance through monitored learning and development occurs. Successful coaches possess a knowledge and understanding of the processes in which their protégé is involved. They must also implement a variety of styles, skills, and techniques that are consistently aligned to the context or environment of their protégé.

Counseling. A type of supportive relationship seen in professional settings that is similar to other forms of support. However, counseling in regards to this research study refers to specific support to foster leadership skills and function. Counseling provides the novice with a plan of action in which defined tasks are performed that help promote the goals of the individual or organization.

Critical friend. A colleague or other educational professional such as a school coach who is committed to helping an educator or school improve. A critical friend provides feedback to individuals or groups and can be applied to various audiences—students, teachers, and/or administrators. Seen as a trusted person, a critical friend asks thought-provoking questions, provides data in order for it to be examined through another lens, and offers critique of a person's work. The primary objective of a critical friend is to be an advocate for the novice's success at work.

Induction program. As the literature review explored, induction programs, where they exist, vary greatly. Many programs focus attention on support during the new administrator's transition from the classroom teacher to assistant principal. Further, they teach knowledge and skills and address socialization of novices into the organization's culture. Novice assistant principals in one district of this study have several scheduled meetings which they were required to attend as a part of their induction program.

Mentor. In general, an experienced and respected practitioner, usually endorsed as being highly effective, who provides support or assistance to a novice. Specific to this

research study, one district maintained a cadre of mentors who were currently serving as assistant principals or former assistant principals who served as district-level administrators. They must have been an administrator in their district for at least 2 years and approved by their principal/supervisor. A full day of training was provided, using Southern Regional Education Board's (SREB, 2008) 13 Critical Success Factors as a framework. Another district, using a different approach, assigned a team of mentors who must be approved at the district-level and were typically school administrators as well as district leaders such as directors and executive directors, each having experience as an assistant principal.

Mentoring. A form of support, typically over an extended period of time, in which a protégé receives assistance, feedback, and guidance from a mentor (Daresh, 2001). In this research study, mentoring was a formal arrangement designed by the Local Education Agency in which a novice assistant principal was supported by either an assigned assistant principal or a team of experienced school and district leaders, each asked to provide support and guidance.

Mentoring program. As the literature review will illustrate, mentoring programs can take many forms. This research study reviewed two formal programs, each with distinct differences, as to how support is provided for new assistant principals. In one district, veteran assistant principals were trained and matched with a novice assistant principal. Mentors were required to meet with their protégé during induction sessions as well as during other times determined by the participants. During the mentor training, positive relationships, confidentiality, active listening, and professional goal setting were stressed. The second district in this study approached protégé support differently. Mentoring was a collaborative approach in which each new assistant principal was

assigned to a team of experienced school and district leaders (assistant principal, principal, director, and executive director). Team members made contact and met with protégés when the need arose. In addition, new assistant principals were required to conduct planning meetings periodically with at least one team member present.

Novice administrator. A newly hired assistant principal in their first or second year. Most protégés in this research study had a teaching background, although a few were school counselors. Additionally, most recently completed MSA (Master of School Administration) programs and were recently hired as assistant principals or served as assistant principal interns. The terms protégé, new administrator, and mentee are used synonymously in this study.

Onboarding. An ongoing process for preparing new employees to their role within an organization. This process begins when the employee is hired, continues throughout the first year on the job, and includes “identified main objectives, key stakeholders and their roles, a level of resource investment, and . . . specifications” (Grillo & Kim, 2015, p. 2).

Preservice program. Prior to entry into the first year of work, assistant principals participate in preservice programs as designed by their educational institution. Most often, in addition to coursework, aspiring assistant principals engage in an internship experience where they shadow working assistant principals and principals as well as assume assigned responsibilities to prepare them for their new leadership role.

Preparation program. The Institutions of Higher Education referenced in this research study were responsible for implementing a state-approved curriculum. Completion of the educational agency’s course of study signified that the student met all requirements and was in good standing for initial licensure.

Socialization. The process which employees undergo when introduced to a new organization including the acclimation to their new role and understanding of the culture. Each organization had its own unique attributes, procedures, and policies; and these were not always documented or published. Understanding the culture of a new work environment and the complex dynamics involved requires time and experience.

Succession planning. A school district's formal plan for leadership preparation. Districts that develop such plans can include a path for an array of personnel including classified employees, teachers, and assistant principals. Succession plans often include clear direction for employees to pursue coursework and professional learning and could potentially lead to career advancement. Succession planning allows school districts to cultivate a cadre of future leaders who are prepared to fill future positions when available.

Supportive relationship. Public and private organizations provide a variety of supportive relationships for new employees. As the literature review will unveil, there were many similarities between these in regards to their structure and intent. This research study sought to analyze the perception of impact for stakeholders involved in a formal mentoring relationship.

Conceptual Framework of Study

As formal assistant principal mentoring programs are rarely used by school districts, this mixed-methodology research study was designed to explore the perceived impact that such programs had on protégés and their mentors. Two school districts in the southeastern United States possessing similar characteristics for validity purposes were analyzed in this research study.

This study was approached from the standpoint that mentoring was one of many

types of supportive relationships that existed for those who were new to a position and that these can be found in a variety of professional settings. There are several key terms often used when describing these relationships, both formal and informal in nature. Baskerville and Goldblatt (2009) defined one such supportive role, a critical friend, as “a capable reflective practitioner (with integrity and passion for teaching and learning) who establishes safe ways of working and negotiates shared understandings to support and challenge a colleague in the deprivatization of their practice” (p. 206). This role is often seen as a means to offer critique, especially useful for those new to their position. “Because the concept of critique often carries negative baggage, a critical friendship requires trust. . . . Many people equate *critique* with *judgment*, and when someone offers criticism, they brace themselves for negative comments” (Costa & Kallick, 1993, p. 49).

Another supportive role that is often seen in professional settings is counseling. Thomas and Thomas (2010) defined this as “the process used by leaders to review with a subordinate the subordinate’s demonstrated performance and potential” (p. 3). Military leadership “views counseling as a central function for developing leaders” (Thomas & Thomas, 2010, p. 3). Another perspective on this relationship model, as articulated by Minter and Edwards (2000), “applies to the marginal performer who demonstrates performance issues that relate more to his or her attitudinal and behavior problems than to deficiencies in skills, knowledge, or abilities” (p. 44). Geroy, Bray, and Venneberg (2005) agreed that the use of counseling is reserved as a “performance problem intervention process which focuses on confronting and correcting people whose performance is below standard” (p. 19).

Whereas counseling may be seen as a punitive approach for those on the receiving end, two additional supportive roles, coaching and mentoring, are typically seen in a

positive light. It is not uncommon for these terms to be used interchangeably; however, they are quite different. CIMA (2002) reported that they are “distinct in both the format they adopt and the desired outcomes” (p. 2). Close inspection of these terms helps delineate the two. The use of coaching helps create a supportive environment that also uses encouragement so that the coachee can develop or acquire new skills (Arnold, 2009). “Coaching is concerned primarily with performance and the development of definable skills. It usually starts with the learning goal already identified” (Clutterbuck, 2001, para. 2), and an approach offering more direct feedback is most likely used.

Although there are parallels between coaching and mentoring, most people agree that a mentor acts as a guide who assists an individual to learn faster and more effectively than they might do alone. [Further], an effective mentor will use a range of skills and techniques to allow an individual to obtain a clearer picture of an organization and their role in it. (Arnold, 2009, p. 2)

Mentors are typically experienced in or familiar with the work of their protégé and often encourage questions that assist in discovering a remedy to challenges without providing a direct solution. A mentor

tend[s] to approach [issues] through questioning processes that force the [protégé] to recognize the problems for themselves. Mentoring is usually a longer-term relationship and is more concerned with helping . . . [determine] what goals to pursue and why. It seeks to build wisdom—the ability to apply skills, knowledge and experience in new situations and to new problems. (Clutterbuck, 2001, para. 2)

As a result, through this relationship, a stronger sense of purpose and confidence is fostered (Arnold, 2009).

A consensus on the interpretation of high quality educational leadership is difficult to achieve. “Much of the educational leadership literature does not focus on actual leadership practices at all . . . [but relates more to] a leaders’ values, beliefs, skills or knowledge that someone thinks leaders need in order to act in an effective manner” (Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris, & Hopkins, 2006, p. 8). Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) identified 21 responsibilities and “indicate that all are important to the effective execution of leadership in schools” (p. 64). In their work on effective schools, Wimpleberg, Teddlie, and Stringfield (1989) argued that principal leadership should not only “attend to general characteristics of behavior such as [having] a vision, but also must identify specific actions that affect student achievement” (Marzano et al., 2005, p. 41). Yukl (1994) discussed leadership as technical and human actions and emphasized these as “a set of observable role behaviors rather than traits . . . [that are] universal – that is, producing leadership effectiveness regardless of the setting” (p. 6).

Cultivating effective and high quality educational leadership is a challenging, yet critical component of school reform. As seen in Figure 1, several components impact the development of effective, high-quality school leaders. The foundation of this research study rests on three fundamental factors—supportive relationships, academic preparation and induction programs as well as succession planning—each with the capacity to influence leadership outcomes. Although evidence suggests there are many positive implications when school districts strategically plan for future leadership positions as well as implement thoughtful induction programs for their novice administrators, particularly if partnered with strong academic preparation programs, the focus of this research study was on the role of supportive relationships (Anderson, 1991; Boyd, Grossman, Ing, Lankford, & Wyckoff, 2009; Leithwood et al., 2004). Throughout many

professional settings, a variety of supportive relationships exist. As the backdrop of this research study occurred in an educational environment, mentoring relationships, specifically, were analyzed to determine the perceptions of impact for those involved.



Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study.

Conclusion

For decades, the public and private business sectors as well as educational organizations have utilized mentoring relationships as a means to help support, recruit, and retain employees. Currently, most school districts facilitate a beginning teacher induction program where veteran teachers, trained as mentors, work with teachers who are new to the career. In an effort to focus on retention and effective leadership, school districts have started to implement mentoring programs for new principals. This formal relationship allows recently hired principals to receive support from those most familiar

with the position. As school districts begin to see a greater need to cultivate prospective leaders in their district, many are beginning to see the importance of assistant principal mentoring as a means to accomplish this.

Chapter 1 of this study has been an introduction to the problem and purpose, warranting a need for additional attention and research. Chapter 2 explores the research that exists with regard to supportive relationships including coaching, critical friendships, counseling, and mentoring. A detailed description of the participants and the processes employed for conducting the research study including the collection and organization of data are discussed in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 of the research study presents the qualitative and quantitative findings from the data collected. Finally, Chapter 5 consists of an analysis of the findings, an overall summary of the study, recommendations for formal assistant principal mentoring programs, and suggestions for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Overview

Through an exploratory review of literature, the researcher examined the historical significance of educational leadership and how the role of school administrators has changed in the last few decades. Through this lens, the importance as well as the need for cultivating effective and high quality educational leaders in 21st Century schools is evident. Additionally, a close look at research on the historical perspective of school leadership preparatory programs and their evolution comprised a significant portion of this review. Current research sheds light on the formation of supportive collegial relationships as a means for professional growth as well as recruitment and retention. As such, an examination of several types that exist in an educational environment was extensively critiqued. Finally, an analysis of the literature relating to an organization's system for building leadership capacity, or succession planning, was analyzed. As a result of this review, the researcher has built a foundation for the perceived impact for stakeholders involved in a school district's formal mentor-mentee relationship.

Literature Review

The need for high quality educational leaders. Yukl (2006) defined leadership as “the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives” (p. 8). Kotter (2001) characterized leaders as those who “don't make plans; they don't solve problems; they don't even organize people” (p. 1). Further, Kotter stated that “what leaders really do is prepare organizations for change and help them cope as they struggle through it” (p. 1). From an educational perspective, the job of administrative leaders is primarily about enhancing the skills and knowledge of

people in the organization, creating a common culture of expectations around the use of those skills and knowledge, holding the various pieces of the organization together in a productive relationship with each other, and holding individuals accountable for their contributions to the collective result (Elmore, 2000, p. 15).

The importance of leadership, as it pertains to any facet of life, has far-reaching effects. Mills (2005) asserted that “few things are more important to human activity than leadership.” Mills maintained that “effective leadership helps our nation through times of peril . . . [and] makes a business organization successful” (p. 10). Mills continued to describe how leadership “enables a not-for-profit organization to fulfill its mission” and, as an attribute of parenting, “enables children to grow strong and healthy and become productive adults” (p. 10). From a business perspective, the success or failure of an organization is most often based upon the leader(s) at the helm. Responsible for promoting the system’s vision and values, leaders must constantly balance the dynamic needs of its employees and that of additional decision makers, all while ensuring the voice of stakeholders is heard.

There are, of course, serious ramifications when a lack of leadership exists. Unskilled leaders find it difficult to make sound decisions that are strategic and systemic. Even then, the likelihood of achieving a successful plan for implementation is dramatically lessened. Ineffective leaders are often unable to change behavior within their teams, cultivate climates of innovation, and build capacity within their organization (Mills, 2005). Zenger, Folkman, Sherwin, and Steel (2012) compared the impact of poor leadership to that of a lead weight: “Like every other weight, their effect is to hold things down. People become immobile and like the lead shield used by an x-ray technician to cover the patient, these leaders block energy from passing through” (p. 4).

Increasingly, educational research articulates the importance as well as the need for strong and decisive leadership. Educational leaders, especially those who assume the principalship, have a profound effect on an organization's productivity, efficiency, and instructional outcomes. According to Boyd et al. (2009), solid research exists pointing to the "principals' effects on school operations, through motivating teachers and students, identifying and articulating vision and goals, developing high performance expectations, fostering communication, allocating resources, and developing organizational structures to support instruction and learning" (p. 21). Principals also have the capacity to influence "the instructional quality of schools through the recruitment, development, and retention of teachers" (Boyd et al., 2009, p. 21). When teacher attrition rates increase within a school, there is a greater risk that it will "disrupt instructional cohesion and likely disadvantage students" (Boyd et al., 2009, p. 19). School leaders have an impact "in several important ways, but primarily through their influence on other staff and on their organizations" (Orr, 2007, p. 2). Those perceived as "effective principals are successful in recruiting, retaining, and cultivating effective teachers" (Clifford, Behrstock-Sherratt, & Feters, 2012, p. 10).

A study conducted by research teams at Public Agenda and American Institutes for Research determined that "teachers viewed principal quality as a strong factor affecting their career decisions" (Clifford et al., 2012, p. 10). Although research from this study identified limitations, it is worth pointing out that when teachers who indicated they did not plan to remain in the profession were questioned, a significant percentage (38%) maintained they would change their mind if working with a principal who could make improvements in regards to their instructional effectiveness (Public Agenda, 2009). Principals' "abilities to recruit, develop, and retain highly effective teachers" has become

increasingly essential for creating successful environments that promote innovative practice (White & Agarwal, 2011, p. 2).

Principal effectiveness, in recent years, has shown to have an impact specifically on the level of student learning and achievement outcomes. Research indicates that “principals make a substantial yet indirect impact on student achievement by choosing school curricula and by creating norms of school culture and working with teachers” (White & Agarwal, 2011, p. 2). Clifford et al. (2012) noted that principals “directly influence school conditions, teacher quality and placement, and instructional quality” (p. 8). Orr (2007) purported significant correlations to school leadership and its influence on student achievement. Leithwood et al. (2004) explained that “evidence suggests that, second only to the influences of classroom instruction, school leadership strongly affects student learning” (p. 3). As efforts to address current academic needs are explored by district leaders, many look to principal leadership as a means to support teachers and foster a vision of high expectations. Leaders pursuing substantive change understand that “‘effective’ or ‘successful’ leadership is critical to school reform” (Leithwood et al., 2004, p. 4). As Fullan (2002) described, “effective school leaders are key to large-scale, sustainable education reform” (p. 16). Additionally, evidence supports that much of a school’s success depends on the principal’s focus on teachers’ knowledge and skills as well as on the professional community (Fullan, 2002). In order to achieve systemic change, a need for “leaders who can create a fundamental transformation in the learning cultures of schools and of the teaching profession itself” is necessary (Fullan, 2002, p. 16).

With such an important role in their educational environment, having a steady pipeline for leadership growth is essential. Recent reports on the state of education

provide a realistic depiction of the current status of K-12 enrollment, how it compares to the last decade, and where it is heading in the near future. Hussar and Bailey (2013) reported,

total public and private elementary and secondary school enrollment was 55 million in fall 2010, representing a 6 percent increase since fall 1996. Between fall 2010, the last year of actual public school data, and fall 2021, a further increase of 7 percent is expected. Increases in public school enrollment are expected in the Northeast, Midwest, South, and West. (p. 1)

As significant student population growth in most geographic areas of the nation continues, school systems need an arsenal of instructional leaders ready to take the reins.

In addition to expected growth and the need to fill new positions, principalships are becoming vacant as many veteran administrators begin to consider their retirement options. Baby Boomer principals have been retiring, and continue to, in large numbers. As a result, the current cadre of principals serving in leadership positions is much younger and inexperienced than in previous years (White & Agarwal, 2011). It is no secret that in every school district of the United States, principals face challenging and hefty workloads. Pont, Nusche, and Moorman (2008) pointed out that “many are reaching retirement [and] it is getting harder to replace them. Potential candidates often hesitate to apply because of overburdened roles, insufficient preparation and training, limited career prospects, and inadequate support and rewards” (p. 9).

Arguably one of the most dynamic and stressful careers one can choose, “educational leaders must guide their schools through the challenges posed by an increasingly complex environment” (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003, p. 1). According to North Carolina Congresswoman Tricia Ann Cotham, one of the few licensed Principals

in the House of Representatives, “the role of the principal has changed dramatically . . . they have to be a dynamic teacher, a great manager, they have to budget, [and] they have to do discipline. It takes a lot of skills” (T. Cotham, personal communication, March 24, 2015). In a time where initiatives centered on school improvement continue to flourish, making sense of this confusing educational landscape “depends largely on the political, managerial, and instructional leadership skills of principals” (Mitchell, 2015, p. 6). With new curricular standards, rigorously designed assessments, and stringent federal guidelines in which they must adhere, aspiring leaders, particularly those preparing for the job of principal, have daunting obstacles to overcome (Cornelius & Cornelius, n.d.).

These challenges, combined with current public perception and failing confidence in education, have made leadership a more difficult and less desirable occupation (Zellner et al., 2002). In a study conducted by the U.S. Department of Education, findings reported that 12% of public school principals and 16% of private school principals who report a high frequency of student disrespect left the principalship (Battle, 2010). In a research study on principal characteristics and school performance, Clark, Martorell, and Rockoff (2009) pointed to state and federal policies as an explanation for why many school principals choose to leave their positions earlier than expected. These moves are deemed as “costly, and [increase] the tendency for less-advantaged schools to be run by less experienced principals . . . [which] could exacerbate educational inequality” (Clark et al., 2009, p. 3).

Succession planning. Understanding that “turnover in leadership has negative ripple effects on schools, and . . . ultimately means wasted money” (Prothero, 2015, p. 10), school districts have developed strategies to recruit and retain effective leaders. To fill potential vacancies with candidates capable of effectively leading schools,

educational leaders have turned to the implementation of succession plans. This strategy is employed

as a result of the combination of the general increase in turnover rates in the principalship, the potential for an even higher turnover rate with Baby Boomers aging into retirement, the modern-day deterrents to the principalship, and the need to avoid the potential performance lag that often accompanies a change in leadership. (Riddick, 2009, p. 8)

Kotter (2001) described the concept of succession planning and the benefits from a business perspective:

Successful corporations don't wait for leaders to come along. They actively seek out people with leadership potential and expose them to career experiences designed to develop that potential. Indeed, with careful selection, nurturing, and encouragement, dozens of people can play important leadership roles in a business organization. (pp. 85-86)

Strong and forward-thinking organizations recognize the need for and understand the impact of developing leaders from within the ranks as a means to strengthen their capacity (Riddick, 2009). In fact, many school principals agree that it is their professional responsibility to groom the assistant principal to become a principal and, as a result, build internal capacity of the school district (Johnson-Taylor & Martin, 2007).

According to Thomas and Thomas (2010), "one of the key tasks of leaders is to develop subordinates and they should apply their knowledge and experience to develop others outside their chain of command as appropriate" (p. 5). Additionally, Thomas and Thomas (2010) maintained that "effective leaders [should be] committed to leader development as a critical part of making their organization better" (p. 5).

Leading researchers pointed out “there is an alarming shortage of qualified aspiring administrators to meet the current and future need for school leaders” (Superville, 2015, p. 1). In an effort to address these challenges, districts around the nation such as Denver Public Schools have “intensified efforts to expand and strengthen the principal pipeline by focusing on how it trains, selects, and supports school leaders” (Superville, 2015, p. 1), beginning with teachers in the classroom. When tracking those who are likely to retire, relocate, or move to different positions, Denver Public Schools looks to those enrolled in their Principal Residency Program as contenders for future positions (Superville, 2015). Maryland Public Schools, according to Maxwell (2015), look to their “most promising assistant principals and [are] preparing them through coaching and peer support to take the helm of schools” (p. 2). Researchers also recognize that “school districts must offer a network of support and foster a career-long approach to administrator development” (Johnson-Taylor & Martin, 2007, p. 1). Such tactics are often designed not only for preparation but as a means for recruitment and retention. “Principals, in uncommon numbers, are leaving their positions in search of more fulfilling and personally healthful work” (Zellner et al., 2002, p. 2). As such, succession plans should maintain that preparation for the principalship not simply end with a certificate, credential, or degree. Rather, it must be ongoing, continuous, and supportive throughout the principal’s career (Zellner & Erlandson, 1997; Zellner et al., 2001).

Although some evidence suggests that a shortage of aspiring certified principals does not exist, there does seem to be a “dearth of candidates with high level-leadership skills” (Roza, 2003, p. 8). “More often than not, the principal’s leadership skills determine whether a school becomes a dynamic learning organization or a failed enterprise” (Gray, Bottoms, & O’Neill, 2007, p. 5). With this in mind, maintaining a

large, diverse pool of quality applicants who aspire to serve in school leadership should easily be a school district's priority (Riddick, 2009). School administrators are often considered to have the most important job in the building (Prothero, 2015). If so, continuous professional learning and training could have profound effects on a school administrator's effectiveness and success. As Robertson (2004) pointed out, "leaders may be at different stages of their careers, [but] there will always be a need for continual renewal, refreshment and redirection in educational leadership practice" (p. 3). It is important to note, however, that "professional development for school leaders is often bypassed . . . [or] is of questionable quality" (Prothero, 2015, p. 10). Considering the enormous value and limits of their time, school districts must consider the effectiveness and essence of learning for their leaders.

Many organizations' plans for succession and "current reform, aim to recruit high potential leaders, provide apprenticeship experiences for prospective leaders, and to provide support for principals while in the job" (Boyd et al., 2009, p. 21). Of particular importance, "improving administrative support in high turnover schools . . . may require both more effective leaders, overall, and incentives (not necessarily monetary), so that administrative positions in these schools become more appealing" (Boyd et al., 2009, p. 21).

As previously noted, recruitment and retention are important considerations when school leaders design long-term plans for their organizations. Considering that the prime responsibility of all education leaders is to put in place learning that engages students intellectually, socially, and emotionally, . . . sustainable leadership [should go] beyond temporary gains in achievement scores to create lasting, meaningful improvements in learning. Sustainable leadership means

planning and preparing for succession—not as an afterthought, but from the first day of a leader’s appointment. (Hargreaves & Fink, 2004, p. 9)

Supportive relationships. According to Eby, Allen, Evans, Ng, and DuBois (2008, in press), a “need to belong” (p. 399) that is both universal and fundamental exists for individuals. Further, a “desire for affiliation and acceptance from others” (Eby et al., 2008, p. 10) can often be a driving force for many. As close relationships are important in one’s personal life, it is no surprise that similar needs exist in the workplace. One common feature of many organizations’ succession plans includes a focus on supportive relationships which are noted as having “a major role to play in making succession planning deliver real value . . . [as] it creates or supports conversations about careers and personal ambition that are difficult to encompass elsewhere” (Eby et al., 2008, p. 10). Additionally, having a supportive relationship

opens horizons, by helping people recognize options they had not previously considered and raising the level of their ambition. It opens windows, by helping people gain an insight and feel for functions and roles, which they have little experience of. And it opens doors, by connecting the mentee to other people and resources, potentially influential in achieving their career ambitions.

(Clutterbuck, 2011, p. 2)

The use of supportive relationships for leadership development is extremely valuable, especially “in such complex, fast-moving and vulnerable environments” (Deans, Oakley, James, & Wrigley, 2006, p. 2).

Over the last few decades, a great deal of research has been conducted around the importance of people and the support as well as resources in which they can offer (Morgan, 1994; Whitaker, 2003). A collective understanding now exists of how “open,

flexible, and proactive minds sharing ideas and working in collaboration” (Barkol, 2006, p. 216) can benefit those involved. Many forms of support exist in organizations, each with their own dynamics and specific attributes. In general, those who engage in relationships of support are more confident and have greater capacity to perform their responsibilities with ease (Robertson, 2004).

Relationships of support have always been connected to psychology and were historically seen as “largely remedial . . . identifying what was wrong with the subject and attempting to fix it” (Wilson, 2010, p. 1). As humanistic psychologists such as Abraham Maslow became prominent, focus shifted to “what was right with people rather than what was wrong” (Wilson, 2010, p. 1) and led to a different perspective on how support could help individuals achieve their goals.

As seen in Figure 2, Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs places “self-actualization” atop the pyramid and suggests that all individuals aspire to reach this place. Many theories on coaching, mentoring, and other supportive relationships use this model as a framework for helping novice employees in their journey.



Figure 2. Components of Personal and Professional Support.

Critical friendships. One such supportive relationship employed by businesses and schools involves providing new employees with a *critical friend*. In most situations, this individual is a

trusted person who asks provocative questions, provides data to be examined through another lens, and offers critique of a person's work as a friend. [They] take the time to fully understand the context of the work presented and the outcomes that the person . . . is working toward. [A critical friend serves as] an advocate for the success (Costa & Kallick, 1993, p. 49)

of their colleague and understand the importance their role serves within the organization. The Glossary of Educational Reform (Hidden Curriculum, 2014) defined this relationship as one "between a colleague or other educational professional . . . who is committed to helping an educator or school improve" (p. 1). Typically, a critical friend offers encouragement but "also provides honest and often candid feedback that may be uncomfortable or difficult to hear" (Hidden Curriculum, 2014, p. 1). Through this

supportive relationship, a new employee, or inductee, is able to receive timely, honest feedback that helps to identify “weaknesses, problems, and emotionally charged issues” (Hidden Curriculum, 2014, p. 1).

It is not uncommon for a critical friend to be considered a “change facilitator . . . [as they have] an increasingly vital role to play across the spectrum of teaching and learning, health promotion, and continuing professional development” (Butler et al., 2011, p. 3). Butler et al. (2011) described the “positive change in students’ social and emotional wellbeing” (p. 3) as a result of increased teacher professional learning and supportive relationships. Critical friends are “pivotal in identifying the needs, facilitating the process of change, and ensuring a seamless integration with the core business, values, and objectives of the school” (Butler et al, 2011, p. 3).

Counseling. An additional form of support employed by some organizations involves counseling. When used, supervisors and organization leaders feel that an employee needs specific and targeted assistance with a weakness. Most often, counseling is utilized when intervention is required before a situation or issue becomes too critical or irreversible. It is not uncommon for counseling to be perceived as a means to help employees with psychological or emotional challenges. “Counselors often provide the simple service of ‘someone to talk to,’ particularly in situations of grief, shock or anxiety” (Wilson, 2010, p. 5). Additionally, this form of support is used to assist with “dysfunctional performance behaviors such as insubordination, lack of respect for authority, not accepting advice, being late for work or leaving early, substance abuse, chronic absenteeism, and abusive behavior” (DeMik, 2007, p. 2). As inferred, counseling has a very specific place in an organization and, depending on the needs of an employee, is not always the most appropriate form of support.

Coaching. Another supportive and personal development method that is often found in professional settings is *coaching*. This type of relationship entails the nurturing of “a person’s own abilities in order to improve behavior and performance . . . [and] had its origins in the world of sports, with coaches helping competitors to achieve success through structured and focused instruction and tutoring” (Deans et al., 2006, pp. 4-5). The application of this supportive method is quite broad. “Coaching can be applied to a variety of areas, such as motivating staff, delegating, problem solving, relationship issues, team building, and staff development” (Fielden, 2005, p. 3). Arnold (2009) described the coach as someone who “creates a particular energy when working with their coachees by being a non-judgemental listener and reflector of the ideas and issues that arise” (p. 1). Robertson (2004) described coaching as a partnership between two peers where “leadership learning is based on real experiences in the leader’s work, reflective observation of those experiences, opportunities to question, problem solve, analyze and develop new ways of thinking and leading and then trying out new ideas” (p. 2). Robertson continued by pointing out that those who receive coaching are more “confident, able and willing to coach the development of others in the education community” (p. 2). Many consider coaching relationships to rely heavily on collaboration and focus on values while working toward established goals, all the while reflecting on progress and changes in beliefs (Fielden, 2005).

A growing and more unified belief that preservice programs are incapable of effectively preparing future administrators exists. As a result, administrative organizations across the nation as well as many state legislative bodies have called for school districts to consider programs in which some form of support such as coaching is provided for new educational leaders (Bloom et al., 2003). According to the Hechinger

Report (2011), successful leadership programs consist of “coaching that supports modeling, questioning, observations of practice and feedback” (p. 3).

“Coaching . . . [is] at the heart of leader development and [one of the] key instruments for improving organizations” (Thomas & Thomas, 2010, p. 5). Many positive implications result when organizations make use of coaching relationships.

Quite often, “employees have increased job satisfaction, which improves productivity and quality, and there is an overall improved use of people, skills and resources, as well as greater flexibility and adaptability to change” (Fielden, 2005, p. 16). Deans et al. (2006) explained that even though many unseen outcomes exist, there is a “clear perception that coaching . . . [is an] effective tool for staff and leadership development” (p. 17).

According to respondent surveys from their research study, many indicated that coaching increased their confidence and self-belief . . . stimulated positive energy to help move forward in moments when you feel stuck . . . increased management skills, such as better people skills and planning . . . [and helped to] encourage and develop creative thinking and problem-solving through reflection and discussion. (Deans et al., 2006, p. 18)

According to many definitions, while coaching and mentoring share the same principles, coaching is primarily focused on performance within the current job and emphasizes development tools, while mentoring focuses on longer-term goals and developing capability.

Mentoring. Many organizations rely on a fourth type of supportive relationship for novice employees known as *mentoring*. This supportive relationship, as a means to improve the quality and efficiency of someone less qualified or proficient, is not a novel concept (Daresh & Playko, 1990). In fact, from a historical perspective, the term

“mentor” has been a part of our culture since Homer’s “Odyssey.”

Quite often, it is difficult to delineate coaching from mentoring as there are subtle differences between the two. Table 1, taken from Deans et al. (2006), depicts the primary distinctions between coaching and mentoring. The duration of a goal, or task, as well as the focus for the participant are contrasting attributes as well as which party establishes the agenda for their work. Additionally, mentoring captures reflection as a means for growth and typically lasts throughout the career of a protégé. Finally, coaching tends to provide a more candid, straightforward, and clear language for feedback where mentoring leaves the protégé in a position to solve problems based on intuition, rather than being told how to proceed.

Table 1

Coaching and Mentoring Differences

Coaching	Mentoring
concerned with task	concerned with implications beyond the task
focuses on skills and performance	focuses on capability and potential
primarily line manager role	works best offline
agenda set by or with coach	agenda set by learner
emphasizes feedback to the learner	emphasizes feedback and reflection by the learner
typically addresses a short-term need	typically a longer-relationship, often ‘for life’
feedback and discussion primarily explicit	feedback and discussion primarily about implicit, intuitive issues and behaviors

Source: Deans et al. (2006).

To further, and more explicitly visualize differences between coaching and

mentoring, Table 2, taken from Amy (2003), reveals the most practical situations in which each of these relationships apply. In most cases, coaching is more appropriate when specific deficiencies are noted and a specific plan is enacted to close the gap. Mentoring is a recommended means of support when the protégé is being provided direction in order to achieve their career and/or development goals and typically helps them to obtain a better understanding of the organization's culture and norms. One final contrast between the two relationships points out that coaching is more suited when complementing traditional training experiences.

Table 2

Applications of Mentoring and Coaching

Coaching may be best when . . .	Mentoring may be best when . . .
The employee is a senior or more experienced leader; or where developmental issues may require strict confidentiality	The employee needs an expert or sponsor
There is a strong desire or need to practice, apply, or implement new skills and behaviors. Excellent complement to traditional training.	The employee will benefit from specific knowledge about the organization's culture, values, and norms, especially when the information is informal and difficult to obtain from traditional sources
The employee realizes there is a gap between where they are and where they want to be (skills, knowledge, career, achievement, etc.), but isn't sure how to address it	The employee is reasonably clear about their career and developmental goals
The employee will be helped by sustained, objective support	The employee will be helped by receiving direction

Source: Amy (2003).

As the notion of mentoring has existed for some time, it is not surprising that

various interpretations of this relationship exist. Mentors have been described as being “helpful through teaching, advising, encouraging, and helping their protégés learn how to deal with organizational politics” (Rawlins & Rawlins, 1983, p. 116). Alleman, Cochran, Doverspike, and Newman (1984) described mentoring as “a relationship in which a person of greater rank or expertise teaches, guides, and develops a novice in an organization or profession” (p. 329). Daresh and Playko (1990) compared mentors to “master tradespersons to whom apprentices might be assigned to learn certain trades” (p. 48). Daresh and Playko concluded that “mentors must be caring and giving people who are truly committed to the enhancement of the professional lives” (p. 50) of those in which they support.

The level of support from mentors can differ based on personalities, confidence, expertise, and other dynamics of those involved in the relationship. Some mentoring relationships exist in which the mentee fulfills a role where they simply distribute information. Although there is value in this, “the importance of mentors resides . . . in their power to motivate people to struggle for their promotion” (Barkol, 2006, p. 217). Callan (2006) explained that the mentor “assists in the transmission of knowledge and skills . . . [but also] “encourages practitioners to develop reflective practice” (p. 8). As a result, “the mentor is a ‘bridge’ between the academic forum and the day-to-day experience encountered” by the mentee (Callan, 2006, p. 8).

When considering the concept of mentoring, specifically, various degrees of this relationship can exist within an organization. In some business environments, through the nature of their work, they foster “informal developmental relationships, which occur naturally in the workplace between less-experienced managers and senior managers, peers, or subordinates” (Douglas, 1997, p. 1). Relationships of support that are more

loosely structured form when two colleagues work together and, based upon the chemistry and personality of those involved, develop into a lasting friendship. Although “informal mentors likely play a substantial role” in the development of protégés, “we know little about them, especially in relation to formal mentoring, which is the cornerstone to most induction programs” (Desimone et al., 2014, p. 88). As seen in most traditional mentoring relationships, leaders assign a veteran employee to work with and support those new to their role. Desimone et al. (2014) described this structure of support as formal mentoring and reference case studies correlational research and trials (Glazerman et al., 2010) in which findings identify characteristics that improve confidence and knowledge as well as increase retention. Mentoring that falls in line with a more formal structure is typically based on specific goals or objectives of the organization. Generally, most formal mentoring relationships operate within a specific time frame; although in some cases, those involved may elect to extend the support.

Organizational Programs in which Support Can Be Found

It is unusual for supportive relationships to exist in isolation. More often, the aforementioned forms of employee consideration are part of a larger program in which the organization maintains and requires new members to participate.

Orientation. Agencies in which a formal *orientation* exists, helps those new to the organization become more acclimated to the norms and values in which they are expected to adhere. When used in conjunction with a supportive partner, orientation can help both parties work “to establish a mutually beneficial collaborative relationship” (Strategies for Improving Advising and Mentoring of Graduate and Professional Students, 2010, p. 2). Kaiser (2006) explained that employees who participate in a formal orientation or training when hired typically have greater confidence and

satisfaction and are more likely to remain with the company as a result.

Induction. Becoming increasingly more common, many institutions and organizations are requiring new employees to participate in some form of *induction* as they begin their career.

Some school districts have started to expand the idea of support from the mentoring model to a more comprehensive induction model that includes an orientation, a support team and release time for induction program activities as well as a mentoring relationship. (Driscoll, 2002, p. 3)

As seen in Figure 3, there can be various facets to an induction program. For example, the Massachusetts Department of Education includes a planning phase that incorporates components such as orientation, workshops, support systems, and evaluation as a final piece. Studies such as the Massachusetts Department of Education's reveal many benefits to participating in an induction program, some of which include enabling the participant to "perform at higher professional levels" and having a positive impact on "their effectiveness in the classroom" (Driscoll, 2002, p. 12).

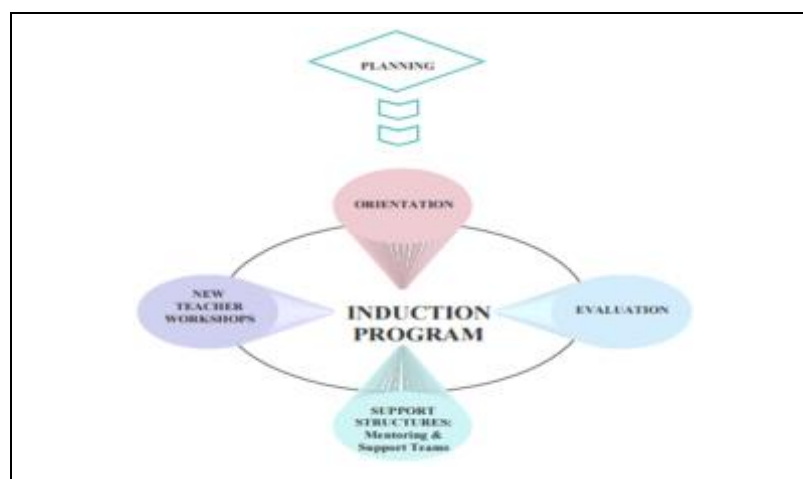


Figure 3. Massachusetts Department of Education Induction Design.

Onboarding. A third type of program in which support can be found is *onboarding*. According to Bauer (2010), “after effective recruitment and selection, one of the most important ways that organizations can improve the effectiveness of their talent management systems is through the strategic use of onboarding” (p. 1). Depending on the organization, onboarding can look different. Additionally, both informal and formal onboarding programs are utilized for new employee support. L’Oreal, a French cosmetics and beauty company, maintains a formal, 2-year onboarding program which includes various training sessions, stakeholder meetings, on-site learning experiences, mentoring, field experience, and site visits with shadowing. Formal onboarding “refers to a written set of coordinated policies and procedures that assist an employee in adjusting to his or her new job in terms of both tasks and socialization” (Bauer, 2010, p. 2). Informal onboarding programs also exist and rarely use conspicuous, documented plans in which employees follow.

Documented benefits exist when onboarding is utilized by an organization. According to Bauer (2010) and seen in Figure 4, participants of formal onboarding report more satisfaction at the workplace, tend to show higher performance efficiency and, as a result, are less likely to leave their company.

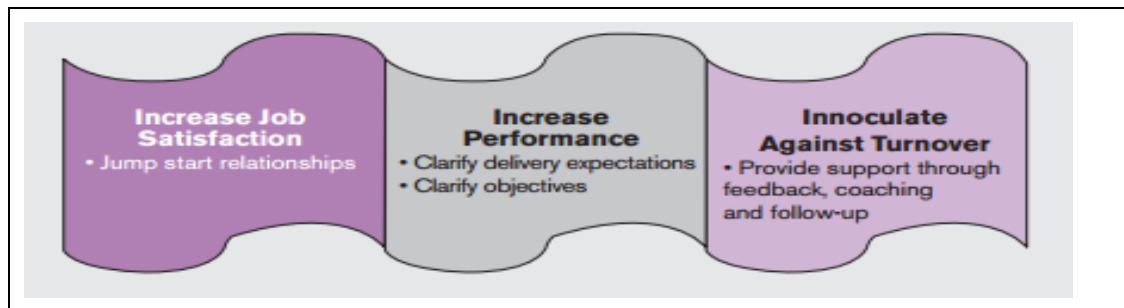


Figure 4. Benefits to Onboarding (Bauer, 2010).

Mentoring in the context of school leadership. “One of the more positive outcomes derived from much of the recent emphasis on school reform has been an assessment of the ways in which people are prepared for professional education roles” (Daresh & Playko, 1990, p. 43). Ferrandino and Fafard (2003) discussed the importance of mentoring new and existing principals as well as the impact leadership has on the greater school community, stating,

Mentoring programs connect principals with people who can help them test ideas, reflect on their own practices, model effective practices, navigate tough situations, and affirm their approaches. Much is known about the value of principal leadership as it relates to the success of teachers and students and how effective leaders create school communities where both students and adults are learning. There is an unquestionable connection between the principals’ ability to lead learning and the support they themselves receive in their everyday work. Monitoring supplies the necessary support as effective job-embedded professional development. (p. 5)

One common component of many organizations’ succession plans includes a means to accomplish this through mentoring. There are many forms in existence with differences in “infrastructure, focus, and outcomes” (Cook, 2011, p. 9). As it pertains to the educational arena, “mentoring and peer relationships in the areas of teacher education and teacher professional growth have also been well established for several years” (Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006, p. 1). Partially due to public dissatisfaction and No Child Left Behind mandates (Cook, 2011), many school systems have developed a beginning teacher support program to help meet the needs of teachers new to the career.

Research, however, is not as comprehensive when it pertains to educational

administration. Over the last decade, state and local education agencies have developed programs that target the principalship (Riddick, 2009). Recognizing the need for support, they have invested a great deal of resources to ensure new principals receive guidance and feedback during the first few years in the role. Daresh and Playko (1990) agreed that “the use of mentors to assist present and future leaders is a powerful tool that may be used to bring about more effective school practice” (p. 44). Documented evidence suggests that, as a result, benefits to both the mentor and protégé as well as to the school district exist (Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006).

Although a larger body of research exists in regards to principal mentor programs, such is not the case for assistant principals (Palermo, 2004). Arguably an equally important position, assistant principals are often ignored or left unsupported as they navigate the dynamics of their new leadership role. Novice assistant principals report feeling isolated, alone, and under scrutiny as beginning administrators adjusting to their new role (Anderson, 1991; Daresh, 2001). Further, assistant principals who are the only one in that position at a school find it next to impossible to receive the guidance and support they need directly from their principal. “Just working beside a principal each day is not enough; assistant principals need more-intentional help to reach their potential” (Johnson-Taylor & Martin, 2007, p. 1).

Within the private industry, there is significant data indicating the value and positive impact that results from mentoring relationships (Halgas & Stoner, 2007). “The corporate business world has developed systems of mentoring which are integral to the induction and supported development of new company employees” (Callan, 2006, p. 6). Daresh and Playko (1990), through their research study of educational mentoring, “observed that there is a tremendous potential to be found in the utilization of

experienced practicing administrators . . . [and] believe that mentoring is one activity that is likely to yield many positive benefits” (pp. 52-53).

Conclusion

The literature reviewed for the purpose of this study included research regarding the need for effective leadership in schools. The position of principal has become increasingly more difficult and, with increasing retirement and growth in the near future, there is no shortage of positions to fill. With more organizations, private and public, recognizing the need for leadership planning, most have developed succession strategies that leverage the capacity of their employees in the hopes of molding future leaders who share the values and qualities of their own organization. As a result, many organizations allocate a vast amount of resources to provide mentors for new and future leaders. Although this practice, as it pertains to the private industry and even to school teachers, has been in place for several decades, it is a relatively new phenomena when applied to educational leadership. Specifically, there is a need to address the lack of research in regards to assistant principal mentoring. Although much can be applied as a result of reviewing current information regarding principal mentoring, the researcher desired to examine specific nuances and dynamics of the assistant principalship and the perception of impact for both the protégé and mentor. Further, additional research is needed to verify perceptions of impact for the school district as a result of utilizing such relationships. This research study sought to fill the gap in the literature that exists in regards to assistant principal mentoring and provide potential support for educational leaders who might consider the implementation of such programs. The following chapter returns to the research questions that remain the focus of this study and detail the research procedures selected as a means to answer them.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

Public perception regarding the quality and design of education has continued to deteriorate as legislative mandates hold teachers and principals to higher accountability measures (Dwyer, 2005; Zellner et al., 2002). School district leaders face significant challenges considering the number of principal vacancies that are multiplying across the nation. Student enrollment numbers are steadily rising as are the number of Baby Boomers choosing to retire. Coupled with the general difficulty and overall challenges of the principalship, a substantive need exists to ensure that high-quality leadership is prepared to guide schools on the best path. As the demands of school leadership continue to evolve, university programs recognize the need for improved preparation for future principals (Hernandez, Roberts, & Menchaca, 2012; Reed & Llanes, 2010). Additionally, school districts are beginning to understand the impact of continued support such as mentor-mentee relationships on its leaders and recognize its role in the development and capacity-building of leadership (Johnson-Taylor & Martin, 2007). The purpose of this study was to examine the formal mentoring program for assistant principals in two public school systems located in the southeastern United States. Through this analysis, the researcher sought to determine the perception of impact for protégés and mentors as a result of engaging in such relationships.

Research questions. The purpose of this research study was to examine formal mentoring programs in place for assistant principals in two public school districts in the southeastern United States. The following research questions were designed to assist in the determination of perceived impact when participating in such relationships.

1. What perception of value or impact exists for the protégé when participating in

- a formal assistant principal mentoring program?
 - a. Does the relationship between the mentor and mentee have the capacity to cause harm to the protégé?
 - b. What factors might affect the protégé's perception of a mentor-mentee relationship?
- 2. What perception of value or impact exists for the mentor participating in a formal assistant principal mentoring program?
 - a. Does the relationship between the mentor and mentee have the capacity to cause harm to the mentor?
 - b. What factors might affect the mentor's perception of a mentor-mentee relationship?

Research Design

A number of sources were referenced when determining the best approach for this research study. When considering the use of a research approach, clear thought on the nature of the topic should dictate the selection. Hammersley (2013) defined qualitative research as

A form of social inquiry that tends to adopt a flexible and data-driven research design, to use relatively unstructured data, to emphasize the essential role of subjectivity in the research process, to study a small number of naturally occurring cases in detail, and to use verbal rather than statistical forms of analysis. (p. 12)

An identified strength of qualitative research is its “ability to provide complex textual descriptions of how people experience a given research issue” (Brikci & Green, 2007, p. 4). It provides information about the “human side of an issue – that is, the often

contradictory behaviors, beliefs, opinions, emotions, and relationships of individuals” (Brikci & Green, 2007, p. 4). Further, Brikci and Green (2007) explained that qualitative research uses an open-ended approach to probing and questioning which “evokes responses that are meaningful and culturally salient to the participant, unanticipated by the researcher, [as well as] rich and explanatory in nature” (p. 4). An additional characteristic of qualitative research reveals that it is “concerned with meaning, and in particular how people make sense of the world and how participants experience events from their perspective” (Griffin, 2004, p. 6).

As Johnson and Christensen (2012) explained, “qualitative research is used when little is known about a topic or phenomenon and when one wants to discover or learn more about it. It is commonly used to understand people’s experiences and to express their perspectives” (p. 33). The nature of this research study involved an examination of the perceived effects of assistant principal mentor-mentee relationships on the novice and mentor. With this in mind, there were several attributes of qualitative methodology which made this approach the most appropriate. Many research authors refer to a few of the following characteristics when introducing qualitative methods: natural setting, researcher as key instrument, multiple sources of data, emergent design, and reflexivity (Creswell, 2014; Hatch, 2002; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). In addition, “the three most common qualitative methods are participant observation, in-depth interviews, and focus groups” (Mack, Woodson, MacQueen, Guest, and Namey, 2005, p. 2). Data gathered for the purpose of this study were obtained in part through these three sources.

Creswell (2014) described qualitative research as using emergent design. Additional sources suggest that through the examination of field notes, a qualitative study will emerge (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). During this study, the researcher analyzed

field notes in an attempt to identify themes or commonalities among the study participants. As the researcher was not restricted by any preconceived principles, themes or messages representing an “an interpretation of events and situations” (Riddick, 2009, p. 49) naturally emerged from the research.

Qualitative methodology allows the researcher to serve as the principal instrument for data collection and typically collects several sources of data. Researchers “collect data themselves through examining documents, observing behavior, or interviewing participants . . . [and then] review all of the data, make sense of it, and organize it into categories or themes that cut across all of the data sources” (Creswell, 2014, pp. 185-186). During the course of this study, the researcher collected various sources of data through observations, interviews, questionnaires, and focus groups. These were examined to determine if commonalities or themes existed so that interpretations and explanations could be generated. A qualitative approach allowed the researcher’s assumptions to be challenged as it pertained to specific phenomena, apparent contradictions, and inconsistencies (Griffin, 2004). This fostered a more objective conclusion upon analyzing the data generated from structured interviews, focus groups, and other field notes taken during the study.

Merriam’s (1998) definition of qualitative research stated that this “form of inquiry helps us understand and explain meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption of the natural setting as possible” (p. 5). Creswell (2014) also described qualitative research in terms of natural setting: “Qualitative researchers tend to collect data in the field at the site where participants experience the issue or problem under study. [Further,] . . . the researchers have face-to-face interaction, often over time” (p. 185). These interactions which include direct communication with people as well as

observing their behaviors assisted the researcher in gaining a better understanding of the issue being examined.

A final common attribute of qualitative methodology is reflexivity. This concept, according to Creswell (2014), requires that “the inquirer reflects about how their role in the study and their personal background, culture, and experiences hold potential for shaping their interpretations . . . [and] may shape the direction of the study” (p. 186). As the researcher was formerly an assistant principal, reflexivity during this study certainly applied. In addition, the researcher coordinated an assistant principal mentoring program within one of the districts with potential implications due to personal bias and experiences.

Through careful referencing of several resources, it is clear that qualitative methodology was a more appropriate means to conduct this research study. The researcher, as the primary instrument for research, pursued the collection of multiple sources of data including questionnaires, individual interviews, focus groups, and participant observations; all of which took into account the natural setting of the phenomenon. In addition, the researcher strongly considered reflexivity and its potential impact on the design and interpretation of data obtained. As the intent of this study was to determine perceptions of impact on a specific relationship that takes place in many professional settings, qualitative research provided a “focus on the operation of social processes in greater depth” (Griffin, 2004, p. 5).

As stated earlier, use of qualitative methodology has its limitations. Although appropriate for this study, opportunities also existed for quantitative research to provide more comprehensive conclusions based on the data gathered. As defined by Creswell (2014), quantitative research provides “a means for testing objective theories by

examining the relationship among variables . . . [and] can be measured, typically on instruments, so that numbered data can be analyzed using statistical procedures” (p. 247). In general, researchers who follow a quantitative approach attempt to determine cause-and-effect relationships, allowing them to make predictions and determine generalizations based on collected, quantifiable data (Johnson & Christensen, 2012).

Figure 5 depicts the strengths and weaknesses of both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies (Choy, 2014, p. 101). There are marked differences as it relates to quantitative and qualitative design. Depending on the heart of the data, each approach has its own strengths and weaknesses. Punch (2014) provided the reminder,

While the quantitative-qualitative distinction has been of major significance in social science research, there has been a marked recent increase in the development and growth of mixed methods research, where quantitative and qualitative data and methods are combined in some way. (p. 4)

Johnson and Christensen (2012) “view the use of multiple perspectives, theories, and research methods as a strength in educational research” (p. 53). This approach tends to result in “complementary strengths and nonoverlapping weaknesses” (Johnson & Christensen, 2012, p. 53). Further, “the mixed approach helps improve the quality of research because the different research approaches have different strengths and different weaknesses” (Johnson & Christensen, 2012, p. 51).

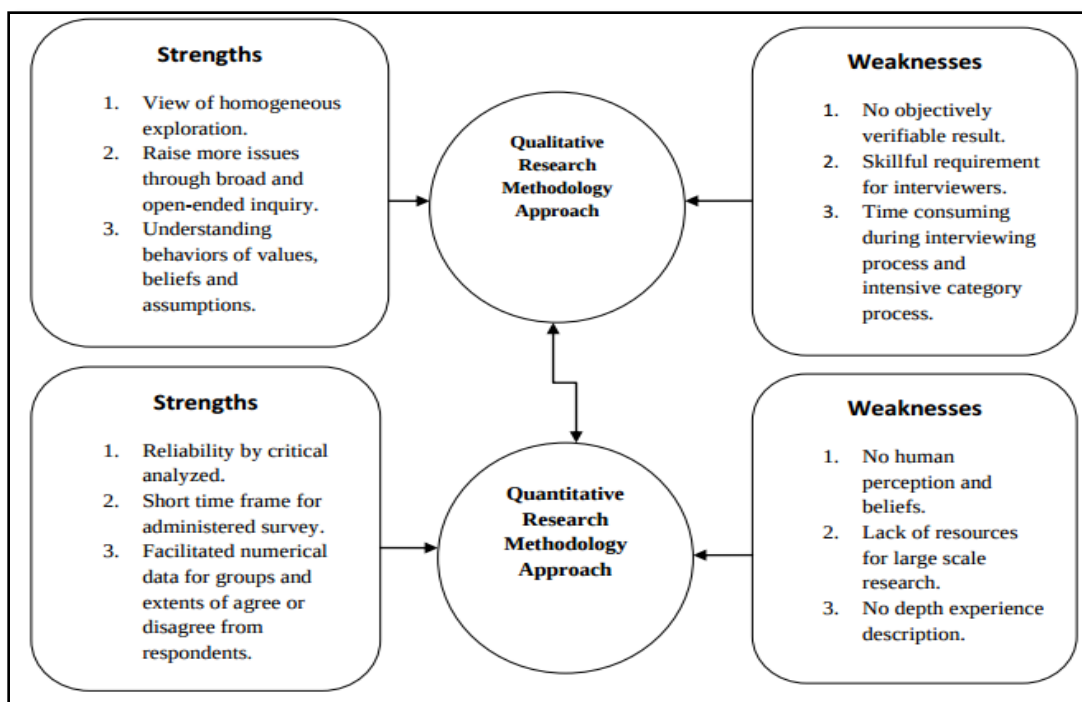


Figure 5. Qualitative and Quantitative Methodologies (Choy, 2014, p. 101).

Procedures. The following provides a detailed report of procedures used for data collection during the course of this research study. As with most qualitative research studies, multiple sources of data were obtained in order to construct the most accurate portrayal of a research phenomenon being examined (Creswell, 2014). To secure sample selections, school districts in the southeastern United States were contacted and reviewed to determine if a formal assistant principal mentoring program existed. Additionally, factors such as duration of the program, district demographics, geographic location, and access to participants were considered to ensure reliability of and access to data. A letter of consent (Appendix A) was used to provide potential participants with background information on the research study as well as seek permission to participate (Bangert, 2012). Specific subject sampling was random in order to include variety.

Upon receiving potential participant names and contact information, the initial

data collection procedure included the deployment of a questionnaire for mentors and protégés. An electronic survey form was created and the link with instructions (Appendix B) was emailed to participants as well as the district mentor program director. This assisted in shedding light on preliminary perceptions of mentoring for both the protégé and the mentor. According to Creswell (2014), surveys offer “a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population”; and as a result, “the researcher generalizes or draws inferences to the population” (pp. 155-156). The protégé questionnaire (Appendix C), consisting of six sections, included a demographics portion with 10 items. Part two included 10 items and asked the protégés about their interaction with a mentor. The final sections of the questionnaire provided the researcher with quantitative data using Likert scale items to determine perceptions of impact based on the mentoring relationship. The protégé questionnaire items used to assist in answering the research questions have been validated through previous mentoring research studies and permission was obtained for their use (Dodson, 2006). A separate questionnaire, validated and used with permission, was deployed to assistant principal mentors (Appendix D) in the two school districts involved in this research study (Palermo, 2004; Williams, 2011; Yoon, 2009). The questionnaire, also an electronic survey with an emailed link, was comprised of three parts: mentor commitment, program understanding, and program characteristics. The questionnaire consisted of open-ended items as well as validated Likert scale items. Several follow-up correspondences via email and phone occurred in order to obtain ample results.

Data collected from questionnaire responses assisted in the development of questions that were used during focus groups (Appendix E). Protégés and mentors from each school district were invited to participate in their own focus group where

participants were given an opportunity to discuss in greater depth components of their school districts' formal mentoring programs. In particular, specific questions regarding the impact of the mentor-mentee relationship were a focus. Information gleaned from focus-group participants were recorded, transcribed, coded, and analyzed for commonalities and themes.

As a result of thematic information realized through focus-group participation, individual interview questions framed from prior studies were designed (Appendix F) and volunteers secured (Curry, 2009; Palermo, 2004; Williams, 2011). Data obtained were examined for similar trends and the information assisted in determining perceptions of impact or value for assistant principal protégés and mentors.

The researcher also conducted informal observations of mentors and mentees as they met during prescribed times. Field notes from these experiences were examined in conjunction with other data collected in order to provide a more holistic picture of school districts' mentoring programs and the perceived impact on those involved.

Similar procedures were implemented to obtain information from district leaders or those who are responsible for coordinating their school districts' assistant principal mentoring program. An open-ended questionnaire generated by the researcher and specific to their role was distributed with follow-up. Data collected drove the content of individual interviews that were scheduled, recorded, transcribed, and analyzed. Finally, artifacts pertaining to the districts' programs were secured and reviewed to provide a clear understanding as to how each assistant principal mentoring program operated.

Limitations of the Study

Although this study used a mixed-methods approach, most data collected stemmed from qualitative research. Questionnaires, being the primary instrument for

data collection, created an opportunity for dishonest responses, as the researcher relied on participants to self-report. In addition, two school districts were examined, each maintaining programs with distinct differences in their features. The size, geographic location, and demographic makeup of each district were also considerations when analyzing their formal mentoring programs. This research study spanned the course of approximately six months in one school year and the opportunity to observe and compare separate cohorts of participants within the same districts was not possible. It is important to note that with only two programs used for this study, the researcher's view of assistant principal mentoring was limited in its scope. Finally, because one of the examined programs was administered in the same school district where the researcher was employed, the possibility for bias and conflict of interest existed. These limitations had the potential to impact the data and researcher's analysis of the results.

Delimitations

Griffin (2004) argued that "research can never be totally value-free or objective (p. 4). Quite often, psychology experts consider a qualitative approach as "less valuable, less valid, and as a 'soft' option which is less scientific" (Griffin, 2004, p. 5). Due to this shared perspective on qualitative research, partial quantitative methodology was employed in an effort to help validate results. As this research study sought to determine the perception of impact for assistant principal mentors and protégés, other administrators (principals and district-level leaders) were used in this study. Additionally, two school districts participated in this study because they had confirmed formal assistant principal mentoring programs in place.

Research Validity

Joppe (2000) described validity as a determination of "whether the research truly

measures that which it was intended to measure or how truthful the research results are” (p. 1). “The use of reliability and validity are common in quantitative research and now it is reconsidered in the qualitative research paradigm” (Golafshani, 2003, p. 597). When considering research reliability as well as validity and triangulation, it is imperative to consider multiple data sources to “establish truth” (Golafshani, 2003, p. 597). Although this study examined two school districts, which limited the number of participants, the use of a mixed methodology helped support findings, themes, and other correlations from data analysis. The collection of several data sources allowed the researcher to triangulate information in order to determine the relevant themes or knowledge that emerged. Mathison (1988) described triangulation as being an “important methodological issue in naturalistic and qualitative approaches” (p. 13), pointing out its incompatible use with traditional technique.

To account for potential interpretive bias, as the researcher was employed in one of the districts used in the study, a strategy known as member checking was utilized. Also known as informant feedback or respondent validation, member checking provides participants with an opportunity to review the researcher’s interpretation of data they provided (Carlson, 2010). Completing this process is a “way of finding out whether the data analysis is congruent with the participants’ experiences” (Curtin & Fossey, 2007, p. 92).

An additional method to help increase validity of research findings, particularly when potential for research bias exists, involved peer debriefing. Creswell (2014) described this safeguard as the use of “a person who reviews and asks questions about the qualitative study so that the account will resonate with people other than the researcher” (p. 202). Spillett (2003) contended that “peer debriefing is particularly advisable because

of a distinctive characteristic of qualitative research—the researcher-as-instrument. Individual researchers are the primary means for data collection and analysis” (p. 2529). Further, Spillett articulated that “the role of the peer debriefer is to facilitate the researcher’s consideration of methodological activities and provide feedback concerning the accuracy and completeness of the researcher’s data collection and data analysis procedures” (p. 2529).

Conclusion

The preceding information describes the methodology and techniques that were employed while conducting a research study that analyzed the effects of formal assistant principal mentoring programs on mentors and protégés in two local education agencies in the southeastern United States. Due to the nature of this study, a qualitative methodology was most appropriate. The researcher, being the primary instrument for data collection, utilized multiple sources of data generated from interviews, questionnaires, and focus groups. Data were used to draw conclusions and make interpretations of the effects perceived for mentors and protégés when formal programs existed. Chapter 4 of this research study involves an analysis of interviews, focus groups, surveys, and other documentation of assistant principal mentoring programs in an attempt to identify patterns and themes.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this research study was to determine the perception of impact, or value, for mentors and protégés who participate in formal assistant principal mentoring. In order to analyze the perception of impact, two school districts in the southeastern United States with assistant principal mentor programs were selected for this study. Chapter 4 details the findings for each school district participating as well as the specific research samples involved. As each maintains its own unique mentoring program, a brief summary of major features is provided. Additionally, procedures for data collection are reviewed and an analysis of the findings produced. Information contained within this chapter was collected over a period of 6 months during the 2015-2016 school year. The study consisted of participants identified as a protégé or mentor who engaged in assistant principal mentoring within the last 3 years. Any specific information potentially leading to the identification of the districts or participants involved in this study have been altered to maintain anonymity.

Instruments. Data for the purpose of this research study were collected in three primary ways. For protégés, an electronic questionnaire (Appendix C) consisting of six sections was deployed. The questionnaire included a demographics portion with 10 items. Part two included 10 items and asked the protégé about their interaction with a mentor. The final sections of the questionnaire provided the researcher with quantitative data using Likert scale items to determine perceptions of impact based on the mentoring relationship. The protégé questionnaire items used to assist in answering the research questions have been validated through previous mentoring research studies and permission was obtained for their use (Dodson, 2006).

A separate questionnaire, validated and used with permission, was deployed to assistant principal mentors (Appendix D) in the two school districts involved in this research study (Palermo, 2004; Williams, 2011; Yoon, 2009). The questionnaire, also an electronic survey with an emailed link, was comprised of three parts: mentor commitment, program understanding, and program characteristics. The questionnaire consisted of open-ended items as well as validated Likert scale items.

An additional source for data collection was through focus groups (Appendix E). Protégés and mentors convened as separate groups, each facilitated by a neutral proxy, and were asked to provide input on their overall experience, the degree of performance impact, obstacles, and advantages of participating in the program.

Finally, interview questions (Appendix F) designed to gather more specific input from protégés and mentors were utilized. Research participants were asked to describe their general feelings as they reflected back to their first year as an assistant principal. Their thoughts on the advantages and disadvantages of mentoring were recorded along with any potential changes in their views regarding the role of assistant principals. Both groups were asked to provide feedback on specific activities from the mentoring experience in which they deemed the most and least helpful. Finally, the interview allowed participants to share their thoughts regarding mentoring and its influence on definite skills associated with the assistant principalship.

Procedures. Before deploying instruments for data collection, an email explaining the purpose of the research study and procedures was individually sent to each protégé and mentor identified as participating in formal assistant principal mentoring programs (Appendix B). Enclosed, recipients found a consent letter in which they were asked to complete and return if choosing to participate in the study (Appendix A).

Once consent was obtained, recipients were issued a link to the electronic questionnaire. After a 2-week period, the researcher reviewed the response rates and determined the need for follow-up correspondence. Responses were reviewed by the researcher and three focus groups were scheduled: two for protégés and one for mentors. An unbiased, yet knowledgeable proxy was designated to facilitate each focus group. In addition to scripting participant responses in real time, each focus group was recorded and transcribed by the researcher. As a final means to capture data, structured interview questions were emailed to participants. Responses were collected and reviewed with a follow-up email sent 2 weeks later. From these submissions, the researcher obtained 30 individuals in which face-to-face meetings were scheduled. During this time, participants were given an opportunity to elaborate and clarify their responses from questionnaires and/or focus groups.

Organization of findings

After a characterization of each district and its assistant principal mentoring program is presented, an analysis of the data as they relate to each research question will be reported. Research findings have been evaluated to determine the perception of impact for protégés who participate in formal assistant principal mentoring programs. Additionally, data were reviewed in order to determine the perception of impact for mentors who supported protégés in such programs. The use of coding allowed the researcher to label different aspects of the subjects within this study as well as make judgments about the meaning of text. Specifically for protégés, response counts, arithmetic means, and modes were calculated from the collection of quantitative data. These are listed in table form for the appropriate research question. Graphs are also provided to illustrate protégé data.

District Demographics

District A and District B are geographically located on the eastern coast of the southern United States. Located adjacent to one another, similar attributes are shared in regards to demographic make-up. Taking direction from the same state education entity, both districts rely on identical state-mandated regulations when making decisions.

School District A employees 2,400 certified employees and maintains a population of over 34,000 students. A total of 44 schools operate within the district, of which 22 are elementary, 14 are middle, and 12 are high school. Based on student enrollment at each school, an allotment of assistant principals is determined. During the 2015-2016 school year, a total of 30 assistant principals served at the elementary level, 18 served at the middle school level, and 40 were employed at the high school level. Of this group, a total of 12 new assistant principals were hired. As these figures illustrate, most schools within this district are allotted more than a single assistant principal position per school.

School District B, serving over 12,000 students in 23 schools, employs 819 teachers with 23 assistant principals. During the 2015-2016 school year, 11 assistant principals served in 12 elementary schools. Of the district's six middle schools, six assistant principals were employed. The district's four high schools employed eight assistant principals. Finally, one middle/high alternative setting operated with one assistant principal. As indicated by the district information, it is worth noting most schools possess a single assistant principal and a few have no position at all.

Participants

Volunteers from both school districts were secured via email invitation (Appendix B) with an explanation of the study and the data collection procedures clearly articulated.

Table 3 provides a few demographic characteristics of protégés who took part in the research study. Of those who participated, 12 were male and 24 were female. As seen below, a mixture of grade levels is evident. Twenty-two secondary participants (from 11 high schools and 11 middle schools) and 19 elementary school participants volunteered for the research study. Finally, participants were asked to indicate an age range as part of their submission. Based on the data collected, the most frequent response was “Under 35.” Additional demographic information was not requested by the researcher out of concern for the participants’ anonymity. Ethnicity, for example, in a small district, could allow for the identification of individual participants.

Table 3

Protégé Participants

Demographic	Gender		Grade Level Experience			Mode of Age Range
	M	F	High School	Middle School	Elementary School	
Number of Participants	12	24	11	11	19	Under 35

Over a period of 6 months, the researcher conducted several forms of qualitative data collection to determine the perception of impact for protégés and mentors participating in formal mentoring programs. Table 4 shows the number of participants for each qualitative instrument used during the study.

Table 4

Qualitative Data Source and Participant Numbers

Instrument	Number of Instruments Used	Total Participants
Questionnaires	64	64
Focus Groups	3	38
Interviews	30	30

Mentoring Program Characteristics

Although the rationale for each school district's mentoring program stems from a commitment to support new assistant principals, distinct differences exist regarding the nature of the program, including who is involved and how support is provided. Table 5 provides a summary, comparing characteristics for each program component. Generally, differences are seen with how mentors are chosen, use of teams rather than individual mentors, and the type of support provided. Both school districts involved in this study ask for participants to complete a program evaluation to assist with continuous improvement. Additionally, both assistant principal mentoring programs are partnered with formal induction plans where participants receive information pertaining to their new school leadership role specific to the district. It is important to note, however, that mentoring program characteristics were the focus of this study, not induction. Reflection is also utilized by each school district. Protégés are encouraged to maintain a system for reviewing events and decisions over a set period of time. This information is helpful, because mentors often begin their dialogue with this in mind. The following section

reviews each school district, providing greater detail regarding program characteristics and focuses more on contrasting attributes.

Table 5

Districts' AP Mentoring Program Comparison

Program Feature	District A	District B
Evaluation	X	X
Mentor Training	X	
Novice Induction Plan	X	X
Professional Growth Plan	X	
Reflection Journals	X	X
School Leader Standards Presentation		X
Student Achievement Plan		X

District A. District A requires assistant principal mentors to participate in professional development training. In order to participate, veteran assistant principals must possess no less than 3 years of school leadership experience. During training, prospective mentors engage in professional discourse around roles and responsibilities assumed by novice school leaders. The group reflects on their experiences, coping mechanisms, time management strategies, and how the nature of school leadership continues to evolve. Additionally, trainees review the basic tenets of mentoring including active listening, confidentiality, trust, and reflection. After completing the training, new assistant principal mentors are added to the district list. The district's Human Resources Department provides the names of newly-hired assistant principals to the program

director and the matching process begins. This process includes a review of school location and grade-level experience (e.g., secondary or elementary). Other considerations such as gender and personality are, on occasion, used to determine a mentor-mentee match when such attributes are relevant to the program director.

Prior to the official start of the school year, an orientation for new assistant principals is scheduled. During this session, newly-hired assistant principals engage in team building, complete personality inventories, and begin their formal acclimation to the career and school district. Additionally, time is allotted for assistant principal mentors to meet and converse with their matched protégé(s). The program director provides an agenda to help stimulate conversations. Mentors assist protégés with establishing professional goals for the year. Goals are developed and aligned using SREB's (2008)¹³ Critical Success Factors, and mentors guide protégés in identifying strategies to address these. Clear expectations for communication are established and reflective practice is discussed as the catalyst for growth. Additionally, pairs begin to establish a platform of trust, creating the foundation for teamwork. A schedule of mentor-protégé meetings that align with assistant principal induction sessions is shared before adjourning.

Throughout the school year, continuous support is provided to novice assistant principals. Required participation in a district induction series offers opportunities for new assistant principals to meet district leaders, acclimate to their role, and collaborate with one another. Furthermore, several predetermined meeting dates are established in which mentors attend. This opportunity allows focused time in a supportive environment for reflective conversations between mentors and protégés. Outside of this time, mentors are also expected to check in with their protégés regularly. Whether through emails, phone calls, or school visits, recurring communication should help ensure support is

available. As a means to encourage reflection, protégés are asked to document their experiences each week, using a template provided during the first orientation session. Additional communication from the program director is used to remind mentors of the importance for keeping a pulse on their protégé's progress. Specific topics to assist in leading their conversations are generated periodically.

District B. District B maintains an assistant principal mentoring and support program with distinct differences. Articulating the importance of strategic recruitment and retention, program directors design a series of meetings to increase leadership growth within the school district. As such, teachers, counselors, and other interested employees assemble periodically, receiving school leadership information. Follow-up newsletters which address topics including school culture, communication, empowerment, and continuous learning are sent to participants, encouraging them to consider leadership opportunities at their school or in the district. Having recently implemented this component of their leadership support plan, program directors concluded that two subgroups appeared from these efforts—those leaning toward curriculum leadership (e.g., specialist or coach) and those desiring a clearly-defined path to the principalship. As a result, tailored material was generated, providing relevant assistance for each group.

When addressing support for newly-hired assistant principals, rather than simply relying on an individual, a team mentoring approach is utilized. Comprised of a principal, central office designee, and a veteran assistant principal, this District Leadership Development Team functions as a collective group whose objective is to support and develop novice assistant principals. In general, the district's intent is to assist new administrators with the day-to-day operations of school, improve instructional leadership skills, and provide guidance that result in professional growth. To that end,

several programmatic elements exist in which new assistant principals are afforded opportunities to collaborate, present accomplishments, and receive formative feedback on their progress.

New assistant principals, or AP-1s as described by the district, receive specific requirements that are communicated during the hiring stage. Monthly information sessions, scheduled for approximately three hours, provide new assistant principals with content and skill-based activities designed to aid in their acclimation to the career. Additionally, each novice assistant principal is required to facilitate several District Leadership Development Team meetings throughout the year. Agendas for initial meetings focus on the state's principal and assistant principal evaluation standards, providing the mentee an opportunity to showcase artifacts supporting their growth and accomplishments. Mentees are expected to design a student achievement action plan at the start of the school year. In the plan, clear and strategic action steps must be addressed. A review of measureable outcomes is conducted at the end of the semester/year as well. Additionally, mentees highlight items such as decision making, appropriate stakeholder feedback, and the collection of miscellaneous data. Subsequent meetings allow the District Leadership Development Team an opportunity to discuss areas of improvement, articulating steps necessary to strengthen the novice's skillset.

Data Collection

School districts involved in the study identified 102 employees as having participated in assistant principal mentoring within the last 3 years. Of this total, 61 were designated as protégés, while 38 served as mentors. As a means to collect data and address the research questions, electronic questionnaires were sent to all identified protégés and mentors. An initial response rate of 37 was recorded 2 weeks after

deployment. Subsequent attempts to retrieve additional responses led to a total of 64 returned questionnaires, 28 from mentors (0.74) and 36 from protégés (0.56). Three focus groups were conducted, two for protégés and one for mentors. A total of 38 participants attended the focus groups. Invitations to participate in an interview were sent with 30 confirmations to participate being retrieved.

An analysis of data revealed several themes participants perceived as having some type of value. Generally, protégés and mentors perceived positive impact when participating in a formal mentoring program. In some instances, however, participants identified situations in which negative experiences were perceived. When possible, factors perceived to have an influence on the programs' impact for participants are noted. The following section reviews the research questions and articulates substantive findings for each.

Results

Research Question 1. What perception of value or impact exists for protégés participating in a formal mentoring relationship? As it pertains to protégés involved in formal assistant principal mentoring, several themes were realized when qualitative and quantitative analyses of questionnaire, focus group, and interview data were conducted. Many protégés reported they felt as if their leadership skills as well as knowledge improved as a result of being mentored. Additionally, confidence and self-efficacy were reported as being strengthened due to their participation in formal mentoring. Another theme identified indicated protégés felt more acclimated to the school district in which they served as well as to their new role. Figure 6 illustrates the major findings for Research Question 1. Although protégés overwhelmingly reported positive involvement with assistant principal mentoring, a few indicated their experience was negative. For

each of the aforementioned themes, additional information is provided in subsequent sections.

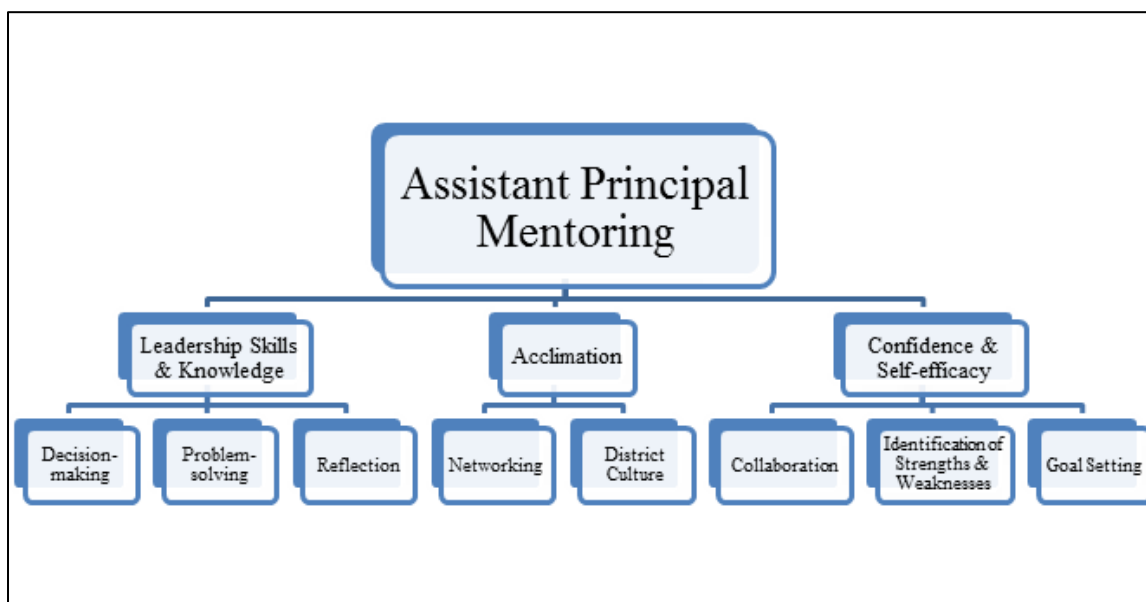


Figure 6. Protégé Findings.

Qualitative data. Theme 1: Improvement in leadership skills and knowledge.

Each mentoring program involved in this study required assigned mentors to have no less than 2 years of assistant principal experience. As a result, mentors possessed a wide range of leadership skills, depending on their background. When asked about the development of their leadership capacity, protégés indicated the improvement of skills and knowledge, pointing to mentor support as the primary contributor. Specifically, protégés reported that decision-making skills were strengthened. One participant, according to questionnaire responses, indicated that observing their mentor during a school observation “helped me see these skills in action, real-time.” When asked during focus groups how protégés reached these conclusions, most mentioned the use of reflective questioning, modeled by mentors, which promoted considerations for alternate

viewpoints. During interviews, protégés made statements such as “my mentor constantly encourages me to pause before making decisions” and “she tells me to take a little time, think before acting, and consider the consequences of my choices.” Reflective practice was a skill many protégés indicated they found effective in their daily work. During focus groups, many pointed out the encouragement mentors provided and value they instilled for reflecting on one’s practice as a way to think critically about decisions, actions, and their impact.

An additional skill in which protégés perceived as improved included the ability to problem solve. Many felt more equipped to think innovatively when faced with unique challenges at their school. One participant explained that “my mentor helps me see the importance of considering several perspectives when looking for a solution.” Another protégé reported that their mentor “forces me to explore no less than two unconventional ways to find an answer.”

Finally, improvement in skills related to basic managerial responsibilities of the school administrator was also thematic. As a result of participating in assistant principal mentoring, protégés indicated an increase in proficiency when faced with tasks such as overseeing school buses, dealing with student behavior, interacting with parents, and ensuring accountability for teachers as well as for other school staff. During an interview, a protégé made it clear that “without my mentor, I never would have survived bus assignments at the beginning of the year.” Another participant commented that their mentor “gives objective and realistic advice for helping parents understand why certain student consequences are assigned.” Further, during focus groups, several participants made statements such as “my mentor was instrumental in helping me fill out huge amounts of suspension paperwork” and “I was more prepared to discuss student

discipline processes with parents because my mentor took time to go over these with me.” One protégé recalled a school visit with their mentor and indicated that “seeing how my mentor handled a student who was disrupting class changed my own process for dealing with discipline.”

Theme 2: Stronger confidence and self-efficacy. Through mentoring, a high number of protégés perceived an increase in their self-efficacy and confidence. Participation in a collegial and collaborative relationship such as mentoring allowed novice administrators to make decisions and implement initiatives with less fear of failure. Through focus groups, protégés reported that they “appreciate the ability to bounce around ideas with their mentors” and how this assisted in thoughtful and strategic planning when making decisions.

Additionally, professional discourse, including instances where a difference of opinion existed, supported protégés with the identification and understanding of their individual strengths and weaknesses. Interviews with protégés revealed several thoughts on this area. “At first, I was upset that my mentor felt my goals were too ambitious. I later realized he simply didn’t want me to fail,” one protégé stated. Another participant said, “Going through the process of reviewing my goals helped me understand where my strengths and weaknesses lie. Now I know my direction.” Most often, through their participation in formal mentoring, protégés established some type of professional development plan in which short-term and long-term goals were discussed.

During focus groups, protégés indicated this exercise provided clarification on what novice assistant principals should accomplish when new to the career. Rather than creating ambitious, unachievable objectives, mentors supported protégés in the development of realistic and attainable goals. As a result, protégés commented on

possessing a greater sense of accomplishment as well as increased confidence when reaching their targets. “For every small goal I accomplished, I felt empowered and ready to take on the next challenge,” one participant reported. During focus groups, participants made comments such as “During crazy days, my mentor helps me look for the smallest victories I can find” and “My mentor helped me develop goals that give me opportunities to shine.” Continued gains in confidence, according to protégés, attributed to an elevated sense of self-efficacy, particularly when assigned new leadership tasks. A second-year protégé stated,

I truly feel I’m ready for more responsibility. During my first year, I was quick to shy away from anything new. Working with my mentor for over a year has given me the confidence to try new and challenging things,

Theme 3: Enhanced adjustment to the school district and school leadership role. Protégés reported a positive experience when relocating to a new school district, citing the role in which mentors played as a major factor. Several novice assistant principals indicated that interactions with district personnel, including central office directors and assistant superintendents, were facilitated by their mentor. As one participant noted, “Opportunities to interact with key players in the district would not have been available without relying on my mentor.” During focus groups, participant comments were recorded such as “It’s unlikely I would have ever spoken to the Superintendent if my mentor hadn’t introduced us” and “Never in a million years would I have been brave enough to strike up a conversation with leaders in those positions without [my mentor’s] encouragement.” Additionally, novice assistant principals reported an increased probability of collegial networking through scheduled mentor meetings, monthly information sessions, and district leadership team presentations. “I enjoy having my

peers around when we meet with our mentors. We even get together and form small groups if discussing the same topic,” said one protégé during an interview.

Further, protégés indicated value for mentoring as it increased their understanding of culture. As many mentors have served across their school district, opportunities to address individual school culture were often available. In most cases, however, protégés specifically mentioned a greater understanding of “hidden rules” and “norms” in which the district operates. Through questionnaire responses, protégés mentioned that their mentor was “instrumental in making me aware of how my decisions would be perceived by community members.” Another protégé stated, “My mentor told me at the beginning of the year that my staff’s expectation includes being involved in decision making, even minor things. I learned very quickly, she was right.”

Assistant principal protégés identified attendance at monthly information sessions as well as other structured meetings as valuable experiences fostering professional discourse and collaboration as well as providing a setting to commiserate. “Being able to talk in a safe environment gave me another avenue for support when solving difficult problems,” one protégé stated. “Simply having time to bounce around ideas is so helpful,” reported another. Additionally, by recognizing the collective challenges of the group, many protégés reported a sense of relief when troubleshooting together. During an interview, a protégé stated that “Those meetings always made me feel as if I wasn’t going at this alone. It was almost like a catharsis when we vented together.”

In general, the adjustment from classroom teacher or school counselor to the role of an assistant principal was perceived to take place more comfortably with mentor guidance. Greater understanding of how their schools and/or districts operate allowed protégés to make decisions based on information that was often unspoken or unrealized.

As one participant stated, “I felt that my time in graduate school would have prepared me for reality. I was so wrong. My mentor has been my rock throughout this transition.”

Quantitative data. The use of validated Likert scale items allowed the researcher to use statistical measures as a means to provide additional information when reporting the study’s data. Protégé questionnaire items were submitted using the following scale: 5=strongly agree, 4=agree, 3=neutral, 2=disagree, and 1=strongly disagree. However, of the 43 questions in which protégés responded, three were reverse-coded as a higher response indicated an unfavorable opinion and a lower response was indicative of a favorable attitude. As the questionnaire was divided into various topics, subscores were reported for each section of the survey (mentoring interaction, preparedness, professional development, student discipline, classroom instruction, content standards and curriculum, parents and community, staff, and dynamics of political issues). For each item within a section, response counts are listed. Additionally, the arithmetic mean is provided.

With regard to mentoring interaction, as seen in Table 6, protégé score averages ranged from 1.61 (I have found support outside the mentoring program) to 4.08 (I trust my mentor not to violate confidentiality). As previously mentioned, three of the questionnaire items relative to mentoring interactions were asked in such a way that a higher score indicated a favorable attitude and a lower score was indicative of an unfavorable opinion. To account for this, these items were reverse coded and are identified with an asterisk below.

Table 6

Mentoring Interaction Items

Item	Response Counts					Mean
	SD	D	N	A	SA	
1. My mentor has been helpful to me.	1	3	2	18	12	4.03
2. I feel supported by my mentor.	1	3	2	16	13	4.06
3. I have developed a close, personal relationship with my mentor.	2	9	0	11	14	3.75
4. I feel that I can talk about any issue or concern with my mentor.	1	7	3	7	18	3.83
5. I trust my mentor not to violate my confidentiality.	0	4	3	15	14	4.08
6. Having a mentor has made my job easier.	1	6	5	13	11	3.75
*7. I have found support outside of the mentoring program.	1	2	0	12	21	1.61
*8. Time is a barrier to the mentoring program.	2	11	4	15	4	2.75
*9. Proximity is a barrier to the mentoring relationship.	5	12	2	14	3	3.08

* Reverse Coded Items.

Table 7 includes questionnaire items that addressed protégés' perceptions of their preparedness for school leadership. Participants responded to questions about delivering professional development, observing classroom instruction, working with student discipline, and articulating their school's vision. The final question in this section, "I enjoy coming to work," may or may not result from participants' perceptions of preparedness.

Table 7

Perceptions of Preparedness Items

Item	Response Count					Mean
	SD	D	N	A	SA	
10. I feel qualified to provide professional development activities in my current position.	0	2	2	22	10	4.11
11. I feel qualified to administer student discipline activities in my current position.	0	0	0	14	21	4.6
12. I feel qualified to supervise classroom instruction in my current position.	0	1	2	14	19	4.44
13. I feel qualified to present the school's vision to parents and community members in my current position.	0	5	4	13	14	4.0
14. I look forward to coming to work.	0	1	2	11	22	4.5

Table 8 includes protégés' responses to items in which professional development was specifically addressed. Participants responded to questions about their focus on adult learning, capacity to analyze data for informing professional development needs, and ability to connect professional development to the school's goals. Additionally, protégés were asked about their skills with technology professional development and resourcefulness. Scores ranged from 2.64 (mentoring guided me to provide up-to-date technology training) to 3.67 (mentoring assisted me in locating resources).

Table 8

Identified Skills–Providing Professional Development

Item	Response Count					Mean
	SD	D	N	A	SA	
15. Mentoring helped me foster a community of learners where adults continually learn.	3	7	7	16	3	3.25
16. Mentoring helped me develop skills to analyze data with staff.	3	10	6	16	1	3.06
17. Mentoring helped me to connect professional development to school learning goals.	4	9	3	17	3	3.12
18. Mentoring guided me to provide up-to-date technology training.	6	13	8	6	3	2.64
19. Mentoring assisted me in locating resources (time, opportunity, and funding) for providing professional development.	2	4	9	10	11	3.67

Protégé responses in regards to student discipline skills are provided in Table 9.

Questions were used to determine the perception of mentoring support for creating a learning-conducive environment, responding to minor and major student disciplinary issues, and facilitating dialogue with students regarding appropriate behavior. Results provide averages ranging from 3.42 (my mentor taught me strategies for facilitating difficult conversations with teachers related to student discipline) to 3.64 (mentoring assisted me in determining fair consequences for students who commit non-suspendable infractions of the school's/district's rules).

Table 9

Identified Skills–Student Discipline

Item	Response Count					Mean
	SD	D	N	A	SA	
20. Mentoring assisted me in creating a school environment that is conducive to student learning.	3	5	3	20	5	3.53
21. Mentoring assisted me in determining fair consequences for students who commit nonsuspendable infractions of the school's/district's rules.	3	6	3	13	11	3.64
22. Mentoring assisted me in responding to major disciplinary issues (possession or under the influence of drugs, or fighting, or stealing).	3	8	4	12	9	3.44
23. My mentor taught me strategies for facilitating difficult conversations with teachers related to student discipline.	3	10	1	13	9	3.42

Data provided in Table 10 address classroom instructional skills and the protégé's perception of mentor support in that area. Questions about observation practices, analyzing data to assist with teachers when planning instruction, and the protégé's ability to recognize obstacles that may prevent student learning are asked. Additionally, the protégé's comfort when navigating the evaluation process and their ability to provide teachers with recommendations for improvement are addressed in this section. Displayed in the table below, scores range from 3.36 (working with my mentor strengthened my skills in using data to offer advice to teachers in planning instruction) to 3.67 (mentoring helped me learn to observe classroom practices that support active learning).

Table 10

Identified Skills—Classroom Instruction

Item	Response Count					Mean
	SD	D	N	A	SA	
24. Mentoring helped me learn to observe classroom practices that support active learning.	3	5	2	18	8	3.67
25. Working with my mentor strengthened my skills in using data to offer advice to teachers in planning instruction.	3	7	5	16	5	3.36
26. My mentor helped me identify and address barriers to student learning.	3	4	5	21	3	3.47
27. My mentor helped me navigate the district's teacher evaluation process.	3	5	6	10	12	3.64
28. Working with my mentor, I gained the confidence to offer teachers specific advice related to instructional strategies.	3	5	5	14	9	3.58

Questions pertaining to content standards and curriculum, and protégés' responses are listed in Table 11. Assistant principal protégés were asked to respond to their perceptions of mentor support and preparation in areas such as analyzing student work using content standards, using student data to measure growth, and connecting student learning goals with the daily operations of school. For this subset, scores ranged from 2.97 (through the mentoring process, I gained the skills to analyze student work using the content standards) to 3.22 (my mentor supported me in using data to measure student performance).

Table 11

Identified Skills–Content Standards and Curriculum

Item	Response Count					Mean
	SD	D	N	A	SA	
29. Through the mentoring process, I gained the skills to analyze student work using the content standards.	4	11	4	16	1	2.97
30. My mentor supported me in using data to measure student performance.	3	8	4	20	1	3.22
31. Through the mentoring process, I learned to tie daily operations of the school to student learning goals.	3	11	6	14	2	3.06

Perceived support for issues relative to parents and community members and protégés' perceptions of mentoring support in these areas are displayed in Table 12.

Protégés responded to items such as parent involvement, engaging the community, partnerships, and positive parent relationships. Scores for this section range from 2.69 (through working with my mentor, I learned to establish partnerships with community groups that support school goals) to 3.53 (my mentor advised me about developing positive relationships with parents).

Table 12

Identified Skills–Parents and Community Members

Item	Response Count					Mean
	SD	D	N	A	SA	
32. My mentor supported me in getting parents to become involved in the school.	4	8	8	13	3	3.08
33. Through the mentoring process, I learned to engage the community in the school's activities.	4	11	9	9	3	2.86
34. Through working with my mentor, I learned to establish partnerships with community groups that support school goals.	3	16	8	7	2	2.69
35. My mentor advised me about developing positive relationships with parents.	3	5	4	18	6	3.53

Table 13 displays the results from questions used to determine protégés' perceptions for preparedness when working with their staff. Scores from this set ranged from 3.22 (my mentor advised me in prioritizing issues to address with staff members) to 3.51 (through the mentoring process, I learned to share decision making).

Table 13

Identified Skills–Staff

Item	Response Count					Mean
	SD	D	N	A	SA	
36. Through the mentoring process, I learned to share decision making.	2	7	4	15	7	3.51
37. My mentor advised me in prioritizing issues to address with staff members.	2	10	8	8	7	3.22
38. My mentor helped me work through potentially difficult personnel matters.	1	11	2	11	10	3.49

The final set of scores result from protégé responses to items that asked about perceptions of mentoring support pertaining to the political nature, or dynamics, of district leaders. Protégés responded to items about leadership opportunities, prioritizing resources, their understanding of school district politics, and the identification of key leaders at the school. In this set, scores ranged from 3.03 (my mentor helped me to prioritize resources to meet the school goals) to 3.69 (my mentor assisted me in identifying the key leaders on my school campus). Table 14 shows each score average for this section of data.

Table 14

Identified Skills–Dynamics and/or Politics of District Leaders

Item	Response Count					Mean
	SD	D	N	A	SA	
39. Through working with my mentor, I learned to seek leadership opportunities from multiple sources.	3	7	3	19	4	3.39
40. My mentor helped me to prioritize resources to meet the school goals.	3	11	7	11	4	3.03
41. My mentor helped me to understand the political nature of working in a school district.	2	5	5	17	7	3.58
42. My mentor assisted me in identifying the key leaders on my school campus.	2	5	5	14	9	3.69

Mentoring perception score. For this study, protégés reported their perception of value when participating in a formal mentoring program. To quantify their responses, a mentoring perception score was calculated for each section of information as well as the entire data set. This score was calculated by obtaining the sum of participants' individual ratings and then dividing that figure by the highest possible number of points for each section. Figure 7, Mentoring Perception Scores, illustrates each section as well as overall scores. Scores range from 0.46 to 0.75 where a possible range of 0.0 to 1.0 exists. Instances where participants failed to submit a response have been adjusted in order to prevent scoring errors.

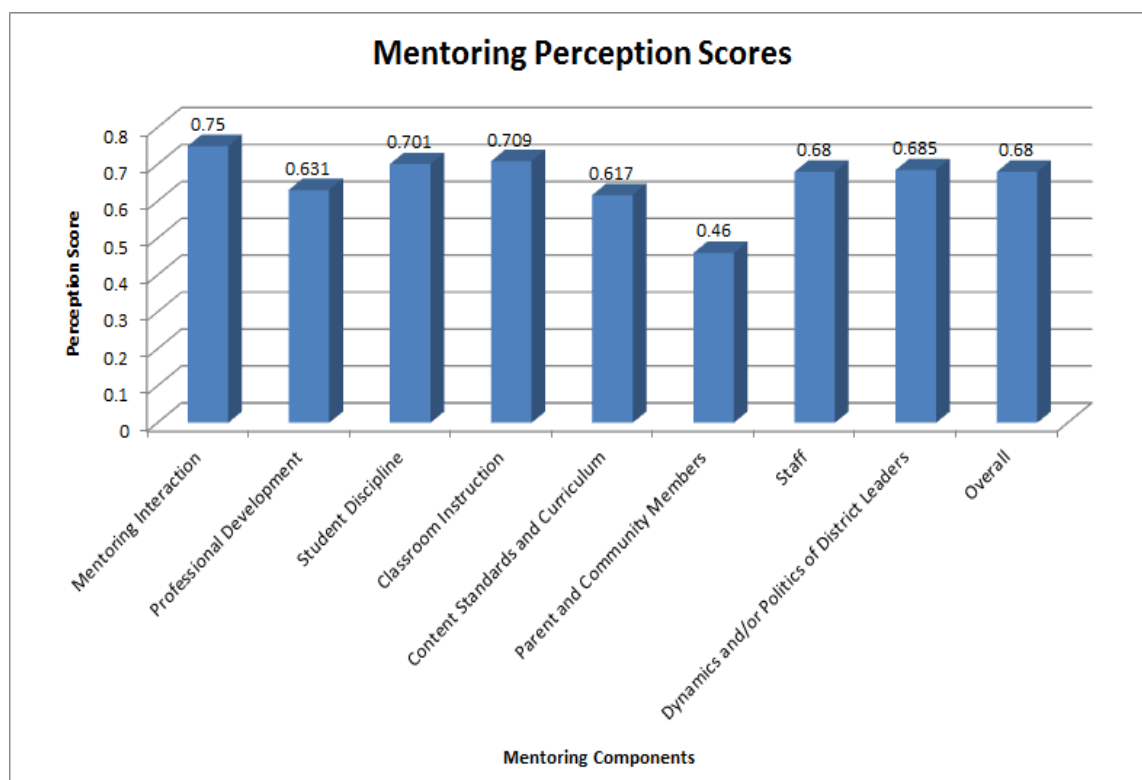


Figure 7. Mentoring Perception Scores.

Research Question 2. What perception of value or impact exists for mentors participating in a formal mentoring relationship? For mentors who participated in formal assistant principal mentoring, a few themes emerged based on similar qualitative data sources such as those examined with protégé samples and can be found in Figure 8. A review of questionnaire responses, focus-group transcripts, and interview feedback revealed that most mentors perceived an increase in personal satisfaction as a result of mentoring a novice assistant principal. Additionally, assistant principal mentors reported their leadership skills, personal practice, and general knowledge improved when they participated in a mentoring relationship. Although, in most cases, mentors reported positive experiences associated with assistant principal mentoring, a few instances were described as unfavorable. Each of the aforementioned themes is explained in greater

detail below.

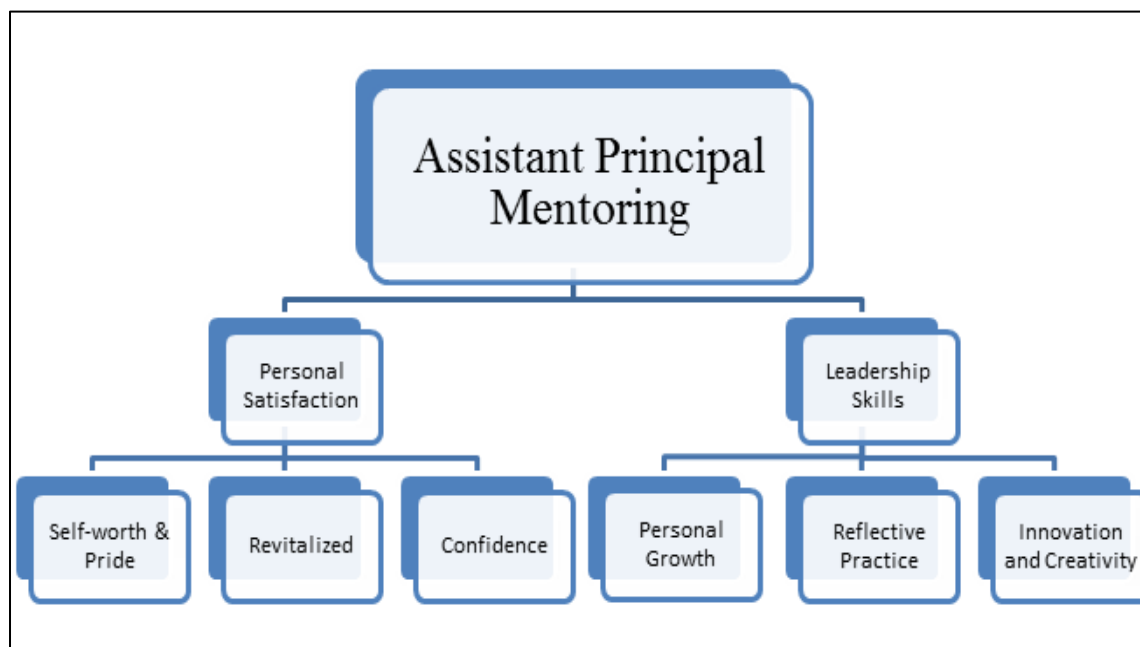


Figure 8. Mentor Findings.

Theme 1: A sense of personal satisfaction. Through sharing of knowledge and expertise, mentors described an increase in their own self-worth. For several, it was easy to recall challenges of the assistant principalship, particularly when new to the career. During a focus group, one mentor recalled his first year: “The amount of responsibility thrust on me with little or no guidance – it was incredible.” Another referenced the informal support she received as a result of being placed in a high school with two other assistant principals: “I’m not quite certain how I would have survived my first year without leaning on my colleagues. Some of our new assistant principals don’t have a situation like that.” The opportunity to help guide protégés, explore creative solutions to the problems they face, and serve as a supportive presence, provided mentors with a greater sense of satisfaction. “Knowing I have the ability to help my protégé, not only when they’re overwhelmed, but each and every day, overshadows all of my own

problems. I'm so happy I've been able to work with them so closely," a mentor stated during their interview.

Further, through helping others grow both professionally and personally, numerous mentors indicated they felt revitalized and more engaged in their own work. Questionnaire responses revealed one mentor's thoughts on how invigorating mentoring was for them: "Through our problem-solving conversations I felt inspired to increase my research and reading. I was not only better prepared to help my mentee, but was more informed and able to help with my own school issues." During an interview, a mentor stated, "Having a protégé this year has really forced me to stay on top of things. I have to know what I'm talking about. I've found myself being more conscientious during meetings, asking questions, and taking thorough notes." Through another interview, a mentor described his new approach to problem-solving. "Because I want [my mentee] to have several options for consideration, I now spend more time searching for several creative solutions before our discussions. I've actually used a few of these with my staff as well," a mentor pointed out.

Additionally, mentors described a sense of pride from working with new assistant principals. Several mentors, during focus groups, discussed how they felt when protégés received recognition or were generally successful. One participant stated, "I couldn't help but think I had, at least to some degree, a part in her success when she was named Assistant Principal of the Year." Another mentor commented, "I felt like a proud momma when she was named principal of the elementary school." During an interview, a mentor said, "When [my protégé] talks about how a problem we've been stressing about for days works out and you know they're appreciative, there's just no better sense of satisfaction."

Satisfaction gained from serving as a formal mentor, according to research participants, led to the development of informal supportive relationships with students, teachers, and other administrators. “Seeing how powerful my relationship was with another assistant principal, I started working with a couple of teachers at my school who were interested in becoming principals in the future,” a mentor stated in their questionnaire. Another mentor, during their interview, said, “I started mentoring a few students a year after working with my first mentee. It was very different from supporting a colleague, but I felt I made such a difference and was able to truly help those kids.”

Finally, through mentoring and its resulting satisfaction, participants perceived an increase in their own self-confidence. Comments revealed through interviews supported this theme. One mentor stated, “I feel better prepared, and stronger in my own skill set now that I’ve worked with a few novice assistant principals.” Another said, “I definitely feel less stressed and know I can speak more intelligently about several topics simply because I’ve had numerous discussions with my mentee about this stuff.” According to a questionnaire response, one mentor wrote, “Working through tough situations, regardless of the outcome, makes me feel stronger and ready for the next challenge.”

Theme 2: Strengthening of leadership skills. Numerous assistant principal mentors asserted an increase in their own competency and capabilities relative to leadership. Several veteran assistant principals were matched with protégés in a grade level that was foreign to them. Consequently, various degrees of research and troubleshooting occurred in order to provide quality support. As such, mentors perceived personal growth in other leadership areas and an increase in their own competency. The impact, according to participants, was powerful enough that several began to think more seriously about the principalship and their own career goals. A mentor discussed this in

detail during her interview:

My mentee is at an elementary school. I've never even stepped foot in one. I had several conversations with county directors about grading, discipline and testing requirements this year. It was more work, but now I'm more prepared if an elementary principal opening is available.

One specific area in which several mentors identified as becoming stronger included listening skills. Through their support of novice administrators, many mentors noticed more of their own attention to active listening. A mentor participant said,

After the training and putting those active listening skills to practice with my protégé, I started to think about how important it was and made more of an effort to do it when my teachers came to talk with me. I even find myself listening to parents more actively now.

During focus groups, several participants commented they were more conscious of how they assisted their protégé with reaching outcomes they discovered rather than simply providing them with the solution.

Another perceived area of improvement was reflective practice. Several participants reported an increase in the frequency and degree of reflection as a result of mentoring. As mentors encouraged their protégés to reflect, they, in turn, began to do the same. Many described more thoughtful and strategic decisions resulting from such efforts. During an interview, one mentor stated,

I've always known that it's important to reflect on your day-to-day work, but I honestly never made time for it. It felt a bit hypocritical when I started encouraging my mentee to do this. That, and hearing how helpful it was to him, forced me to do a better job.

Another mentor said,

I've started using my own reflections as a conversation starter with my protégé.

Modeling my own expectations is important and I feel many of the positive changes we've made at my school wouldn't have happened if our team didn't build in time to reflect.

Additionally, through working with protégés, several mentors described an increase in their digital literacy skills. It was not uncommon for protégés to provide their mentor with support relative to new and familiar digital tools. A mentor, during focus groups, stated, "I have learned so much about technology from my protégé. I've transferred all of my paper calendar stuff to Google Calendar. Now I can access it anywhere!" Another participant mentioned during their interview, "I feel like a little kid. [My mentee] shows me new instructional phone apps all the time. My teachers think I'm so tech savvy now." Although the purpose for this was often professional, a few mentors mentioned assistance with personal matters as well. "I started investing online through SigFig and Mint.com because [my protégé] showed me how easy it was. Now we're constantly comparing our financial portfolios."

Negative experiences. Although most participants in formal assistant principal mentoring reported perceptions of value, a few occasions of less desirable experiences were reported. In some instances, protégés and mentors reported negative experiences as a result of participating in formal assistant principal mentoring. Although rare, the researcher has included this information to provide a holistic picture of the participants' perceptions. The researcher makes no claims regarding causation for negative experience but offers a general perspective based primarily on qualitative findings.

During interviews and focus groups, commentary from a few protégés indicated

their participation in formal mentoring was unfavorable. Specifically, novice assistant principals reported infrequent communication and neglect from their mentor as one reason for making such claims. “The only time I ever heard from my mentor was during the first meeting set up by the county. I’m not sure I’d be able to tell you what he looked like if I saw him come through the door right now,” stated one protégé. Another protégé reported through their questionnaire, “We started off so well at the beginning of the year. Around November, two emails went unanswered as well as a phone message. I finally gave up.”

Through interviews, two mentors described contrasting personalities and attitudes regarding the support they could provide as leading to conflict resulting in diminishing efforts. Consequently, the relationships dissolved and communication ceased altogether. One stated, “I tried very hard to work with [my protégé], but I got the sense he knew it all and didn’t need me. I just stopped trying to help.” Another indicated,

I started thinking [my protégé] wanted me to just tell her what to do every time she called. I explained that my role was to help guide her. I think she got frustrated with me. Our relationship was never the same after that.

Finally, one protégé indicated a few instances in which vastly opposing opinions between their mentor and their principal caused friction. As a result, the protégé reported fewer attempts and less supportive contact from their mentor. The protégé stated, when recalling the event,

On at least one occasion, my principal and mentor disagreed on how to handle a student disciplinary situation. It really put me in an odd position. I also know that my principal contacted the program director and asked about swapping mentors. That didn’t happen, but my assigned mentor was really hands-off from

that point forward.

Summary

This chapter reviewed the purpose of the research study as well as the school districts and participants involved. Additionally, data collection procedures and the organization of findings were articulated. As each district involved in the research study maintained different assistant principal mentoring programs, a description of each was provided. Finally, various qualitative and quantitative findings, as they aligned with the research questions, were explored. Chapter 5 includes an analysis of the data, summary of the study, and recommendations for assistant principal mentor programs, implications for educational leadership, and considerations for future research.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a summary of the research study and analyze the findings as they relate to each research question. Additionally, the study's findings and alignment to existing research will be explored. Further, this chapter includes recommendations and implications for educational practice when considering assistant principal mentoring programs. Finally, guidance and suggestions for future investigative research conclude Chapter 5.

Assistant principal mentors and protégés who identified as engaging in formal mentoring volunteered to participate in the research study. Two school districts located in the southeastern United States were selected for the study as each maintained an assistant principal mentoring program and possessed similar geographic and demographic characteristics. Although each district involved in the study assigned assistant principals a mentor, with support being the primary rationale, program characteristics varied between the two.

Throughout the course of this study, the following research questions served as a guide.

1. What perception of value or impact exists for the protégé when participating in a formal assistant principal mentoring program?
2. What perception of value or impact exists for the mentor participating in a formal assistant principal mentoring program?

A mixed-methods approach was designed to determine the perception of impact or value for protégés who participated in a formal mentoring program (Research Question 1). A qualitative research design was employed to determine the perception of impact or

value for mentors who participated in a formal mentoring program (Research Question 2). Further, the study provided participants opportunities to articulate experiences they perceived to be unfavorable or having a negative impact. In order to respond to research questions, instruments including electronic surveys, individual interviews, and focus groups were utilized to collect data.

Discussion

Through surveys, focus groups, and interview responses, assistant principal mentors and protégés indicated their perceptions of value as a result of participating in formal mentoring. Additionally, participants discussed mentoring experiences that were perceived as having a negative impact. A review of qualitative data revealed several salient points which are discussed below. Further, quantitative data obtained from participants helped substantiate several themes discovered by the researcher.

Protégé perceptions. The first research question from this study was designed to determine the perception of impact for protégés who took part in formal mentoring interactions. The study examined mentoring interaction by reviewing how helpful and supported protégés felt as a result of working with an assigned mentor. Overwhelmingly, protégés reported feeling encouraged, advised, and supported throughout their experience. Additionally, protégés felt their job was easier as a result of mentoring and could talk about various issues or concerns while trusting their mentor to respect confidentiality. Several perceived value regarding the opportunity to discuss school-related issues with someone who was impartial. The vast majority felt safe and trusted that anonymity would be protected when those conversations occurred. Based upon the findings, three specific areas in which protégés perceived meaningful impact were

discovered: leadership skills and knowledge, confidence and self-efficacy, and acclimation. Quantifiable data were organized by leadership areas and helped support protégé perceptions. An overall mentoring perception score of 0.68 (of 1.0) was calculated from protégé responses to each of the survey items. As noted in Chapter 4, this percentage was calculated by using protégé responses to each questionnaire item and assigning a maximum amount of points that could be tallied for each section. Participants' raw scores reflected the sum of each response item and were then divided by the total number of maximum points possible. The quotient of these figures generated a mentoring perception score for each respondent. An overall mentoring perception score was calculated by taking the arithmetic mean of each individual mentoring perception score. The following provides a summary of the research and discussion of the data discovered through this study.

Leadership skills and knowledge. High quality school leaders must possess a vast set of skills and knowledge to be effective in their role. As a result of participating in formal mentoring, protégés improved their leadership skills and understanding of effective leadership practices. Student discipline and classroom management were areas in which this was the most evident. Protégés indicated value in the support they received, allowing them to create student learning-conducive environments. Additionally, through dissecting district procedures and school board policies, protégés stated they gained insight and felt more knowledgeable regarding the expectations to which students were held. Similarly, protégés reported value from mentoring when determining fair consequences for students. Assistant principals often assume the role of head disciplinarian, although principals reserve final decision-making rights. As such, how assistant principals approach student discipline, especially when issuing consequences, is

a crucial consideration. Several protégés indicated the impact school culture had on disciplinary decision making. Mentors, having additional years of experience within their school district, assisted in the comprehension of documented expectations, according to many protégés. Further, protégés indicated value in conversations with mentors regarding best practices, unpublished convictions, and unstated beliefs held by those in authority. Many student discipline policies were too vague, leaving protégés uncertain of their decisions when assigning punishment. Mentors provided clear guidance as well as recommendations for managing disciplinary action.

An important variable in the discipline of students is the role teachers take in the process. According to protégés, mentoring assisted in the design and implementation of their conversations with teaching staff. New assistant principals learned strategies for facilitating difficult conversations with teachers related to student discipline as well as specific ways of conducting such conversations. Mentors also assisted protégés by recommending district trainings and online resources designed to strengthen their skillset.

Confidence and self-efficacy. Protégés indicated their perception of value in the area of classroom instruction as a result of mentoring experiences. Through mentoring interactions, protégés felt more capable of observing classroom practices that supported active learning. Charged with conducting evaluations of staff, they commented on the challenges of providing specific, high-quality feedback. New assistant principals, having recently transitioned from previous roles, sometimes found conversations with teachers and their instructional practice difficult to manage. As a result, protégés would, at times, avoid these conversations altogether. As a result of mentoring, protégés reported feeling more confident and, ultimately, more effective while helping teachers strengthen their pedagogy.

Similarly, protégés mentioned becoming more comfortable with content standards and curriculum as a result of working with their mentor. They indicated gains in their confidence while analyzing student work using the content standards as well as using data to measure student performance. Protégés were more familiar with how to tie daily operations of the school to student learning goals and, as such, more inclined to make greater efforts in this area.

Protégés also identified the educator evaluation process as an area in which they lacked clarity. Struggling with procedures for utilizing the online system, unsure of how to conduct pre and postobservations, and being unnerved by the management of employee growth plans, protégés felt more confident due to the support of their mentor. As such, they were able to focus their energy on supporting teacher practices and student learning.

Acclimation. With regard to working with staff, particularly in the areas of shared decision making and personnel concerns, protégés commented on the difficulty they faced during their transition from classroom teacher to school leader. Several participants identified as “under 35” and referenced their age as a potential barrier when working with veteran teachers. Discussions regarding credibility and authority often surfaced when protégés planned communication with staff. As such, mentors frequently assisted in the design of such plans, even role playing when necessary. From the perspective of protégés, mentoring made a significant impact on how smoothly the adjustment to school leadership was managed.

Mentoring also had a substantial impact for protégés as they maneuvered through the political environment of school leadership. Although a solid mentoring perception score was generated, two specific questions regarding this topic led to significant

arithmetic means. According to protégés, mentors assisted in their understanding of the political nature of working in a school district as well as in the identification of key leaders on their school campus. Mentors in both school districts were selected, in part, due to their years of service in the organization. As such, knowledge regarding culture and political dynamics was often sought by protégés prior to making important decisions. An understanding of to whom at the school and district level questions should be directed was especially important to beginning assistant principals who previously possessed a limited vantage point of school and school district operations.

Mentoring perceptions. The second research question addressed perceptions of impact for mentors who engaged in formal assistant principal mentoring. The study's findings illustrate how and to what degree mentors felt their participation in assistant principal mentoring was valuable. Through qualitative surveys, focus groups, and interviews, assistant principal mentor data revealed two key themes: personal satisfaction and leadership skills. The following provides a discussion of each theme realized in this research study.

Personal satisfaction. Overwhelmingly, assistant principal mentors felt their involvement in mentoring was a rewarding experience. As most were not formally mentored themselves, they were acutely aware of the potential value for such relationships. Through their role of helping assistant principals navigate the first years of their careers, mentors felt greater satisfaction in their own work. Although mentors noted a large commitment of time, it was well-worth the investment as they guided their protégés with reaching goals, strengthening skills, and increasing self-confidence.

The majority of mentors involved in this research study possessed several years of experience as an assistant principal. They acknowledged the support and guidance

received throughout their career from various groups and how critical it was for their own success. As such, they considered their service in the mentoring program as a vital contribution to the profession. In fact, many saw their involvement as a component of the district's succession plan of helping to prepare and retain future school leaders.

Through their interactions with protégés, assistant principal mentors increased their ability to troubleshoot, work through difficult situations, and support those from different backgrounds. Knowing they were responsible for providing such essential guidance, mentors were motivated to work harder in order to assist protégés professionally and personally. As a result, immense satisfaction and pride resulted from helping protégés achieve goals and successfully overcome challenges. Over the course of their relationship, these experiences helped to strengthen mentor confidence. In fact, a few mentor participants noted their increase in preparation and feelings toward seeking a principalship as a result of mentoring.

Leadership skills. Mentors who participated in this research study described an increase in their own skillset as a result of working with protégés. Helping individuals from various backgrounds made a positive impact on mentors' interpersonal skills. Similar effects were noted regarding protégé personalities. Mentors understood the importance of staff relations as an educational leader. Working with protégés who in some cases possessed drastically different personalities improved the mentor's ability to focus on issues rather than the individual. Overwhelmingly, mentors described improvement with their patience, understanding, and objectivity while working with others. For leaders in a dynamic environment, these skills are essential for promoting an organization's vision, capturing stakeholder involvement, and interacting with diverse groups at every level.

Another leadership skill in which mentors grew was in the area of reflective practice. Several participants indicated that taking time to think critically about their work led to more thoughtful and innovative solutions. Rather than making quick, reactive decisions, mentors developed skills and practices which promoted deliberate and attentive reflection to challenging issues they faced. Mentors, reflecting on the work of their protégé, became more self-aware as a result. Examining their own emotions, leadership strengths and weaknesses, and how to address improvement action fostered greater understanding of how to guide staff when performance concerns were present.

Insignificant and/or negative impact. Part of this research study, in addition to determining perceptions of impact, sought to understand potential negative experiences resulting from mentoring interactions. Although most findings indicate participants perceived value from the experience, some areas were reportedly insignificant. In a few instances, participants perceived negative experiences as a result of engaging in the mentoring program.

Overall, protégé perceptions for mentoring support in the area of professional development were not meaningful. Participants discussed mentoring and whether it helped to foster a community of learners where adults continually grow as well as how mentoring assisted with analyzing data, connecting professional development with school goals, locating resources to aid in providing professional development, and providing up-to-date technology training. Protégés reported they received little guidance from mentors when discussing professional development needs for technology. In fact, many protégés felt they were more proficient with digital skills than their mentor. Additionally, protégés relied heavily on beginning teachers in their school when technology-related professional development was needed. Protégés also discussed the lack of impact mentoring made

with locating resources (time, opportunity, and funding) for providing professional development. It is important to note that not all protégés involved in this study were delegated professional development responsibilities. For example, in secondary settings where more than one assistant principal was present, specific tasks were assigned to each administrator by the principal. Those engaged in partnerships such as this may have perceived less support in this area.

An additional area in which protégés perceived little value pertained to various stakeholder involvement. Generally speaking, protégés did not perceive support from mentors when seeking parental involvement in school, engaging the community in the school's activities, nor in the establishment of partnerships with community groups that support school goals. Only in the area of developing positive relationships with parents did protégés perceive some mentor support, albeit limited. On occasion, protégés discussed having conversations with their mentors regarding the role of parents and indicated the need for advice prior to making contact with them.

Although protégés perceived value in their mentoring interactions around the area of curriculum, a few similar areas generated lower arithmetic means by participants. Such differences could be explained by considering the strengths and weaknesses self-identified by mentors in this study. When discussing various leadership roles and skills, a vast array of familiarity and comfort was articulated by mentors. In some instances, mentors specifically identified budget and curriculum as areas of weakness. Protégés who worked with assistant principal mentors possessing stronger curriculum skills may have perceived and subsequently reported a stronger sense of support in this area. For protégés matched with mentors identified as weak in this area, lack of support may have been perceived.

A few areas were reported by protégés as having a negative impact on their mentoring experience. One challenge protégés indicated they experienced during mentoring dealt with time. Many of the participants in this research study were enrolled in their district's induction program in addition to being matched with a mentor. As a result, they were pulled from the school building on several occasions in order to attend meetings, training, and orientation activities. Coupled with the amount of time new administrators spent identifying best practices for addressing situations which they had never previously encountered, extra time to interact with their mentor was not easily available. Further, some protégés indicated they were unable to connect with their mentor when addressing time-sensitive issues. Educational administration is a fast-paced career, and many decisions must be made expeditiously. Mentors, involved in their own work, were not always available to assist with questions or concerns. This was not perceived favorably by some protégés.

Another barrier reported by both protégés and mentors involved the proximity to their counterpart. This concern was more prevalent in School District A due to their matching process (grade-level priority) and having only one mentor. Although email and phone communication were part of their routine, some protégés mentioned the need and want for face-to-face discourse on occasion. Being able to visit with one another, particularly during the work day, was challenging when over 25 miles separated them. Some participants reported their desire to meet with one another for coffee or dinner. This was difficult to accomplish for those having greater distances to travel, particularly when it involved driving the opposite direction from their home.

In a few instances, as a result of working with diverse personalities, mentors felt their attempts to support protégés were unsuccessful. Indications that strong-willed

protégés were unreceptive to mentors' advice, on occasion, led to the relationship dissolving prematurely. Conversely, protégés who were too dependent on their mentor, seeking quick answers rather than guidance, were perceived as frustrated and decreased their communication.

Finally, when asked if they sought help outside of the mentoring relationship, protégés affirmed such support was requested. Although low responses may suggest a lack of value perceived by protégés, many indicated this was not the case. When asked about seeking assistance from others, many protégés reported their interest in obtaining alternate opinions when researching a problem. Others indicated they received recommendations from their principal regarding who might be an "expert" on a specific task in which they were working.

Existing Research Alignment

Several findings from this research study were consistent with the literature review. Historically, the assistant principal's role has included rudimentary, managerial-like tasks. Monitoring school buses, assigning lockers, supervising dances and athletics, and taking punitive action when students misbehave are just a few assistant principal responsibilities carried out each day. As a result, it is uncommon for assistant principals to have the time or energy for other leadership assignments. Mentors and protégés involved in this study made similar claims. Protégés, in particular, felt there were few opportunities to engage in more thought-provoking work as they were often bombarded with "buses, books, and butts." Oleszewski, Shoho, and Barnett (2012) discussed the role of an assistant principal and its comparison to a police officer. Oleszewski et al. surmised, "It is the responsibility of the assistant principal to enforce the rules of school, ensure student safety, mediate conflicts, and patrol the halls" (p. 276). Further, "student

management is a time-consuming responsibility for assistant principals Although this is a necessary responsibility, it can lead to decreased job performance and satisfaction” (Oleszewski et al., 2012, p. 277).

Additionally, principals are less likely to relinquish fundamental leadership responsibilities to their assistants when ultimately charged with their school’s performance. Protégé participants involved in this study commented on the limited likelihood of involvement with respect to budget, curriculum, and serious concerns with personnel. Although many of the traditional behaviors once associated with school leadership were enough to maintain an efficient organization in the past, major shifts in the role and responsibilities associated with the principalship have been seen in the last several years. According to Alvoid and Black (2014), “the concept of the principal as a building manager has given way to a model where the principal is an aspirational leader, a team builder, a coach, and an agent of visionary change” (p. 1). Chan, Webb, and Bowen (2003) noted that many assistant principals identify a “lack of preparation . . . because of the duties/responsibilities they are assigned as APs. [They do] not have many opportunities to perform duties/responsibilities associated with the principalship” (p. 4). Participants in this study described the dramatic difference between coursework and field experience. Several indicated they were not prepared for the more accurate, challenging reality of educational leadership.

Considering these dramatic changes in the profession, along with limited support and inadequate training, many schools are left with vacant principal positions (Alvoid & Black, 2014). As districts seek to fill these vacancies, many face significant challenges finding candidates who are adequately prepared. Mitgang (2003) reported that “districts are experiencing difficulty in attracting sufficient numbers of candidates certified to fill

vacancies and capable of leading the academic improvements that the times demand” (p. 2). Principals, themselves, feel inadequately prepared based on preservice training. “Aspiring school administrators, potentially responsible for the quality of learning achieved by countless numbers of students, must be tested against rigorous performance requirements during a challenging internship supervised by experts in the field” (Gray et al., 2007, p. 10).

Further, “once on the job, they do not feel adequately supported in their roles by their school districts” (Alvoid & Black, 2014, p. 2). Principals felt that “increased expectations and demands have made the job less appealing to teachers who see what principals do and decide not to follow in their footsteps” (Cusick, 2003, p. 4). Alvoid and Black (2014) noted that continuing demands of the profession “have prompted some school districts to consider more proactive ways to support principals” (p. 2).

As a way to manage apparent deficiencies in preparation and support the field experience of new educational leaders, many organizations have turned to mentoring as a means to improve the quality of their employees. According to Boldra, Landin, Repta, Winistorfer, and Westphal (2008), leaders understand mentoring “can be beneficial to the organization, the mentor and the protégé” (p. 35). Additionally, Boldra et al. claimed mentoring is recognized as providing “positive benefits” supporting “growth and development” for those involved (p. 35). Drago-Severson (2009) indicated that “mentoring is a practice that can support both the mentee and the mentor as growing individuals” (p. 220).

Daresh (2001) acknowledged several benefits derived from mentoring. For mentors, “greater overall job satisfaction, increased recognition from their peers, greater opportunities for career advancement, and renewed enthusiasm for the profession”

(Daresh, 2001, p. 11) were reported. Mentor participants involved in this study also described a greater sense of satisfaction stemming from their experience. Although no specific opportunities for advancement were identified, several mentors discussed an increase in confidence which led them to seek principalships in the school district. Adams (2013) discussed how being a mentor can be a significant form of professional development for both parties involved, allowing the mentor opportunities to share practices and build skills as a reflective school leader. On several occasions, mentors from this study revealed the value of reflection in their work and expressed the role it played in decision making. Further, mentors spoke of their own professional growth due to their interactions with protégés. With opportunities to learn new technological skills, mentors felt better prepared to work with their staff when offering feedback on digital learning.

Further, Daresh (2001) described protégé benefits such as “increased confidence about their professional competence, the ability to see theory translated into practice, the creation of a collegial support system, and a sense of belonging” (p. 11). An increase in confidence for protégés was seen throughout this study. Several protégés identified their interactions with mentors as justification for these feelings. They spoke of the importance and role mentors’ advice played in their decisions as well as the increased likelihood of attempting tasks due to the support they received. Yirci and Kocabas (2010) also described the professional benefits for protégés. Yirci and Kocabas stated that through mentoring, protégés become “more familiar with the job, networking, developing managerial skills and establishing better communications” (p. 7). During this study, protégé perceptions mirrored the comments found in literature. They noted the value of interacting with other school and district leaders as well as improvements in their

communication skills as a result of mentoring. Boldra et al. (2008) described mentoring as a “useful strategy to help protégés develop skills in key areas such as decision making, navigating the organization, team development and leadership” (p. 35). On numerous occasions, protégés described the value of mentoring as it helped them understand the hidden rules of their school and district. Additionally, mentor advice was valuable with respect to stakeholder input for decision-making purposes.

Although several documented advantages of mentoring exist, the literature review also indicates barriers that can limit its impact. Curry (2009) described the concerns in which assistant principals and principals shared in regards to time constraints. Many educational leaders felt that important components of mentoring could not be addressed because other tasks required their attention. Several participants from this research study described the impact of time as a challenge to mentoring. This was more present in elementary schools where often, only one assistant principal position exists.

Turban and Lee (2007) discussed participant personality and its role in the success or failure of formal mentoring relationships. Turban and Lee stated,

One explanation relating to why formal relationships are not as beneficial as informal relationships is that some of the beneficial aspects of social attraction may be absent in formally assigned mentoring pairs. Better understanding of how protégé and mentor personality characteristics influence mentoring relationship success can help organizations better utilize formal mentoring relationships. (p. 22)

Eby and McManus (2004) made reference to mentor and protégé personalities as well but also suggested the existence of a continuum of dysfunctional relationships based heavily on the type of personality possessed by those involved. This continuum, ranging from

somewhat effective to highly dysfunctional, might explain how some participant personalities contribute to unfavorable relationships including harassment, exploitation, and sabotage. Findings from this research study included instances where protégés and mentors felt, due to personality differences, the impact of mentoring was less powerful. In fact, a few participants noted the demise of their relationship, perceiving examples such as lack of trust, inability to concede, and issues with loyalty as the root cause.

Implications for Educational Practice

As demands of school leadership become more formidable, many promising educators with aspirations of professional growth shy away from the post, citing high levels of stress, long hours, and limited control as justification for their decision. “Leadership . . . has become more stressful, more political, more complex, and more time-consuming” (Hess & Kelly, 2007, p. 35). In addition to a smaller candidate pool, many veterans are reaching retirement age and withdrawing from the career (Bartlett, 2011; Fink & Brayman, 2004; Wallace Foundation, 2007). Additionally, district leaders cite preservice preparation that does not mirror the reality of school leadership as one explanation for the lack of qualified candidates. “Principals themselves are among the first to agree that they need to be more effectively prepared for their jobs” (Hess & Kelly, 2007, p. 3). Many reported that “leadership programs in graduate schools of education are out of touch with the realities of what it takes to run today’s school districts” (Farkas, Johnson, & Duffett, 2003, p. 39). As a result, school systems have increased leadership vacancies and are unable to locate quality candidates for the position. Considering the current state of education and the need for effective, high-quality leadership, school districts continue to search for innovative recruitment and retention tactics.

As reported through this study’s demographic data, the mode age of protégé

participants was “under 35.” Although educated, completing a formal preparation program and fully licensed as a school administrator, protégés lack the practical experience necessary to have an effective impact on student achievement. “Obtaining a principal license from a university should not signal the end of leadership training” (Fleck, 2008, p. 26). Mentoring is contextual training that strengthens the skills of those new to the career. Although many novice assistant principals take the initiative to seek support from their peers, the caliber and frequency of their experiences can be questionable. According to Hess and Kelly (2007), “superintendents make clear that they hold new and more demanding expectations for principals” (p. 2). Findings from this research study echo the sentiments of Williams (2011): “If [school districts are] serious about the importance of effective school leaders, the development of assistant principals cannot be left to chance” (p. 125).

Literature referenced in this research study stresses the importance of school leadership and its impact on student outcomes, teacher morale, and the overall effectiveness of school operations. With the growing complexity of education and a shrinking pool of high-quality candidates from which district leaders can choose, the need for immediate innovative and practical solutions has never been more important. Assistant principal mentoring can be a far-reaching and cost-effective strategy that helps combat leadership attrition while building the internal capacity of an organization. As such, school district human resource departments could organize a cadre of veteran assistant principals as mentors and pair them with novice assistant principals when hired. Developing a selection process that honors participant requests (e.g., proximity, grade level, personality) as well as establishes organized opportunities for mentors and protégés to meet would be important considerations for the success of the program.

For assistant principals employed in local education agencies without such supportive programs, research from this study can be used to authenticate the value in seeking informal assistance from those possessing practical field experiences. As previously noted, most principal preparation programs focus on the theoretical foundation of school leadership. Graduates of these programs are not adequately prepared to contend with the complicated nature of their newly assumed role. Experienced mentors serve as a supportive bridge to assist with their personal and professional adjustment. Pollock, Wang, and Hauseman (2014) offered a few recommendations for current and aspiring leaders when seeking ways to more positively engage in their role. These recommendations include being informed and proactive, building a leadership skill set, developing coping strategies, and developing a supportive network. As it pertains to collegial and personal support, “friends, family and fellow administrators are the three main groups to whom principals turn for support in an effort to cope with the demands of their workload” (Pollock et al., 2014, p. 37). The ability to lean on others, formally or not, provides an enormous advantage to educational leaders.

Study Limitations

A few factors may have strengthened this research study. Although a mixed methodology was used to capture data, only protégé participants provided quantitative information. The researcher relied solely on a qualitative approach with mentor participants. Although triangulation of data through surveys, interviews, and focus groups increased research validity, quantifiable data could have been beneficial. As noted in Chapter 4, three questionnaire items used to collect protégé data were reverse coded during the report of findings. The questions, as presented on the survey, may have led to inaccurate responses if participants were not observant. Additionally, increasing

the number of school districts involved in the study could strengthen research validity. Finally, as noted in Chapter 3, one assistant principal mentoring program in which data were collected was coordinated by the researcher. Although precautions were implemented to decrease research bias, complete elimination of all potential for this was uncertain.

Recommendations for Further Study

Findings from this study illustrate the perceived impact for mentors and protégés who engaged in formal mentoring relationships. Two school districts in the southeastern United States participated in the research study which took place over 6 months. As both districts possessed similar geographic and demographic similarities, a study including additional systems conducted over an extended period of time and possessing a more diverse district makeup, could yield data from which programmatic improvements are made.

Further, the exploration of informal mentoring relationships and how they compare to those of a formal nature might provide helpful information leading to a greater understanding of how organization and program processes can impact leadership outcomes. Additionally, the concept of mentor teaming could be explored and compared to traditional mentoring approaches. Although one of the school districts involved in this study assigned a team of mentors to support their novice assistant principals, the majority of research did not focus on this dynamic in detail.

Each program involved in this research study maintained its own selection process with varying degrees of involvement from mentors and/or protégés. Most often, participants were matched by their mentor program directors. As a significant body of research on mentoring focuses on the relationship between those involved, a study based

on various factors leading to mentor and protégé pairing could provide substantial revelations regarding which of these has the greatest impact. Further, analyzing demographics such as gender, age, ethnicity, and years of experience could contribute to the collective knowledge on mentoring relationships. Examining the professional background of each mentoring participant might provide insight for matching improvements. For example, pairing an assistant principal mentor who has comprehensive secondary experience might better serve a novice assistant principal in a similar environment. School districts with mentoring programs may also realize greater potential for success if personalities of their participants are considered in the matching process. A study involving personality inventories and their use in the matching process could produce viable data for designing high quality mentoring programs.

Summary

This research study was designed to seek the perception of impact, or value, for assistant principal protégés and mentors who participated in formal mentoring programs. Although direct causation between mentoring and its impact was not determined, valuable insight was gained with respect to educational leadership, specifically with regard to the preparation of assistant principals for the principalship. Additionally, several recommendations for assistant principal mentoring programs were offered in an effort to improve the acclimation and preparation for future school leadership. Finally, as mentioned throughout this study, limited research regarding assistant principal mentoring exists. Considerations for future research were outlined in order to increase the development, awareness, general knowledge, and value of this important topic. In light of significant research on the impact educational leaders have on school environments, particularly with respect to student achievement, the need for thoughtful and intentional

support should be a priority for school districts. Students, teachers, and other educational stakeholders deserve high-quality leaders who are adequately prepared to drive reform, cultivate innovation, and deliver results. Inattention to the powerful tool of assistant principal mentorship programs and the implications such programs have on sustaining leadership is ill-advised; assistant principals have been forced to “hit the floor running” for far too long, and formal mentoring is a cost-effective strategy that not only prepares them for future leadership roles but helps to sustain the organization’s pipeline of leaders for years to come.

References

- Adams, M. (2013). *Growing as a leader through developing others: The effect of being a mentor principal*. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved April 24, 2016, from <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1169&context=cehsdaddiss>
- Alleman, E., Cochran, J., Doverspike, J., & Newman, I. (1984). Enriching mentoring relationships. *Personnel and Guidance Journal*, 62, 329-332.
- Alsbury, T. L., & Hackmann, D. G. (2006). Learning from experience: Initial findings of a mentoring/induction program for novice principals and superintendents. *Planning and Changing*, 37(3-4), 169-189.
- Alvoid, L. & Black, W. L. (2014). *The changing role of the principal: How high-achieving districts are recalibrating school leadership*. Retrieved February 16, 2016, from <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education/report/2014/07/01/93015/the-changing-role-of-the-principal/>
- Amy, P. (2003). *Coaching/mentoring distinctions*. Retrieved April 7, 2015, from <http://www.sitemason.com/files/1Pfgw/Distinctions%20Between%20Coaching%20and%20Mentoring.pdf>
- Anderson, M. E. (1991). *Principals: How to train, recruit, select, induct, and evaluate leaders for America's schools*. Eugene, OR: ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management.
- Arnold, J. (2009). *Coaching skills for leaders in the workplace: How to develop, motivate, and get the best from your staff*. Oxford, UK: How To Content Publishing.
- Bangert, K. (2012). *Investigating the effectiveness of a principals' formal mentoring program*. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved August 1, 2015, from http://scholarworks.montana.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1/2289/Skillestad_BangertK0812.pdf?sequence=1
- Barkol, R. (2006). She made us principals: A case study of a female principal who pushed 12 teachers to principalship. *International Journal of Educational Reform*, 15(2), 213-233.
- Barlett, C. (2011). *Principal succession: Trends and impacts*. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved April 11, 2016, from <https://uh-ir.tdl.org/uh-ir/bitstream/handle/10657/263/BARTLETT-.pdf?sequence=2>

- Baskerville, D. & Goldblatt, H. (2009). Learning to be a critical friend: From professional indifference through challenge to unguarded conversations. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 39(2), 205-221.
- Battle, D. (2010). *Principal attrition and mobility: Results from the 2008-09 principal follow-up survey* (NCES 2010-337). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Bauer, T. 2010. *Onboarding new employees: Maximizing success*. Retrieved July 28, 2015, from <http://www.shrm.org/about/foundation/products/documents/onboarding%20epg-%20final.pdf>
- Bloom, G., Castagna, C., & Warren, B. (2003). More than mentors: Principal coaching. *Leadership*, 32(5), 18-28.
- Boldra, J., Landin, C., Repta, K., Winistorfer, W., & Westphal, J. (2008). The value of leadership development through mentoring: More experienced colleagues can help protégés. *Health Progress*, July-August, 33-36.
- Boyd, D., Grossman, P., Ing, M., Lankford, H., & Wyckoff, J. (2009). *The influence of school administrators on teacher retention decisions*. Retrieved October 2, 2014, from http://web.stanford.edu/~sloeb/papers/Admin%20and%20Retention%2012_12_09.pdf
- Brikci, M., & Green, J. (2007). *A guide to using qualitative research methodology*. Medecins Sans Frontieres. Retrieved October 5, 2014, from http://evaluation.msf.at/fileadmin/evaluation/files/documents/resources_MSF/MSF_Qualitative_Methods.pdf
- Butler, H., Krelle, A., Seal, I., Trafford, L., Drew, S., Hargreaves, J., . . . Bond, L. (2011). *The critical friend: Facilitating change and wellbeing in school communities*. Victoria: ACER Press.
- Callan, S. (2006). *What is mentoring?: Mentoring in the early years*. (pp. 5-17). London: SAGE Publications Ltd. Retrieved January 3, 2015, from <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781446213674.n2>
- Carlson, J. (2010). Avoiding traps in member checking. *The Qualitative Report*, 15(5), 1102-1113. Retrieved August 5, 2015, from <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR15-5/carlson.pdf>

- Chan, T. C., Webb, L., & Bowen C. (2003). *Are assistant principals prepared for principalship? How do assistant principals perceive?* Retrieved March 29, 2016, from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED481543.pdf>
- Chapman, J. D. (2005). *Recruitment, retention, and development of school principals*. Paris: International Academy of Education and International Institute for Educational Planning.
- Chartered Institute of Management Accountants. (2002). *Mentoring and coaching: An overview*. Retrieved July 19, 2014, from http://www.cimaglobal.com/Documents/ImportedDocuments/mentoringcoaching_techrpt_0102.pdf
- Choy, L. T. (2014). The strengths and weaknesses of research methodology: Comparison and complementary between qualitative and quantitative approaches. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 19(4), 99-104.
- Clark, D., Martorell, P. & Rockoff, J. (2009). *School principals and school performance*. National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research. Retrieved April 7, 2015, from <http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/1001427-school-principals.pdf>
- Clifford, M., Behrstock-Sherratt, E., & Feters, J. (2012). *The ripple effect: A synthesis of research on principal influence to inform performance evaluation design*. Retrieved March 27, 2015, from http://www.air.org/sites/default/files/downloads/report/1707_The_Ripple_Effect_d8_Online_0.pdf
- Clutterbuck, D. (2001). *Everyone needs a mentor: Fostering talent at work*. London: CIPD.
- Clutterbuck, D. (2011). *Mentoring and succession planning*. Retrieved April 22, 2015, from [http://www.gpstrategiesltd.com/downloads/Mentoring-and-succession-planning-v2.0-June-2011\[27\].pdf](http://www.gpstrategiesltd.com/downloads/Mentoring-and-succession-planning-v2.0-June-2011[27].pdf)
- Cook, J. (2011). *Examining the mentoring experience of teachers*. National Council of Professors of Educational Administration. Retrieved April 22, 2015, from <http://cnx.org/content/m42021/latest/>
- Cornelius, J. L., & Cornelius, J.P. (n.d.). *The challenges of public school administrators in the new millennium*. Retrieved November 12, 2014, from <http://www.nationalforum.com/Electronic%20Journal%20Volumes/Cornelius,%20J.%20L.%20The%20Challenges%20of%20Public%20School%20Administrators%20In%20The%20New%20Millennium.pdf>
- Costa, A., & Kallick, B. (1993). Through the lens of a critical friend. *Educational Leadership*, 51(2), 49-51.

- Creswell, J. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Curry, T. (2009). *Administrators' perceptions of mentoring programs for new assistant principals*. (Doctoral Dissertation). Retrieved February 14, 2014, from <http://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1315&context=etd>
- Curtin, M., & Fossey, E. (2007). Appraising the trustworthiness of qualitative studies: Guidelines for occupational therapists. *Australian Occupational Therapy Journal*, 54, 88-94.
- Cusick, P. (2003). *A study of Michigan's school principal shortage*. Michigan State University. Policy Report No. 12. Retrieved March 30, 2016, from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED498589.pdf>
- Daresh, J. C. (2001). *Leaders helping leaders*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Daresh, J., & Playko, M. (1990). *Mentoring for effective school administration*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2003). Keeping good teachers: Why it matters, what leaders can do. *Educational Leadership*, 60(8), 6-13.
- Darling-Hammond, L., LaPointe, M., Meyerson, D., Orr, M. T., & Cohen, C. (2007). *Preparing school leaders for a changing world: Lessons from exemplary leadership development programs*. Stanford: The Wallace Foundation. Retrieved February 28, 2015, from <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/school-leadership/key-research/Documents/Preparing-School-Leaders.pdf>
- Deans, F., Oakley, L., James, R., & Wrigley, R. (2006). *Coaching and mentoring for leadership development in civil society*. Retrieved January 21, 2015, from <http://www.eldis.org/vfile/upload/1/document/0803/ID2788.pdf>
- DeMik, R. (2007). *Coaching, counseling, and mentoring: A strategic need in training and development*. Retrieved July 28, 2015, from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED504505.pdf>
- Desimone, L., Hochberg, E., Porter, A., Polikoff, M., Schwartz, R., & Johnson, L. (2014). Formal and informal mentoring: Complementary, compensatory, or consistent? *Journal of Teacher Education*, 65(2), 88-110.
- Dodson, R. (2006). *The effectiveness of principal training and formal mentoring programs*. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved, August 1, 2015, from <http://dc.etsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3581&context=etd>

- Douglas, C. (1997). *Formal mentoring programs in organizations*. Greensboro, NC: Center for Creative Leadership.
- Drago-Severson, E. (2009). *Leading adult learning: Supporting adult development in our schools*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Driscoll, D. (2002). *Teacher induction programs in Massachusetts: A summary*. Massachusetts Department of Education. Retrieved July 28, 2015, from http://www.doe.mass.edu/educators/mentor/induct_rpt.pdf
- Dwyer, C. (2005). *Leadership capacities for a changing environment: State and district responses to the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*. Providence, RI: Education Alliance at Brown University
- Eby, L. T., & McManus, S. E. (2004). The protégé's role in negative mentoring experiences. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 65, 255-275.
- Eby, L., Allen, T., Evans, S., Ng, T., & DuBois, D. (2008). Does mentoring matter? A multidisciplinary meta-analysis comparing mentored and non-mentored individuals. *National Institute of Health Public Access*, 72(2), 254-267.
- Elmore, R. F. (2000). *Building a new structure for school leadership*. Washington, DC: Albert Shanker Institute.
- Emerson, R. M., Fretz, R., & Shaw, L. L. (1995). *Writing ethnographic field notes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Farkas, S., Johnson, J., & Duffett, A. (2003). *Rolling up their sleeves: Superintendents and principals talk about what's needed to fix public schools*. New York: Public Agenda.
- Feiman-Nemser, S., & Parker, M. (1992). Mentoring in context: A Comparison for two U.S. programs for beginning teachers. *National Center for Research on Teacher Learning*. Michigan State University.
- Ferrandino, V., & Fafard, M. (2003). *Making the case for principal mentoring*. Providence, RI: Brown University.
- Fielden, S. (2005). *Literature review: Coaching effectiveness – a summary*. NHS Leadership Center for Diversity and Work Psychology, Manchester Business School. Retrieved June 14, 2014, from http://literacy.kent.edu/coaching/information/Research/NHS_CDWPCoachingEffectiveness.pdf
- Fink, D., & Brayman, C. (2004). Principals' succession and educational change. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 42(4), 431-49.

- Fleck, F. (2008). The balanced principal: Veteran principals' best practices are new a new principal's strongest weapon. *Principal*, September/October, 24-31. Retrieved, April 16, 2016, from <https://www.naesp.org/resources/2/Principal/2007/S-Op24.pdf>
- Fullan, M. (2002). The change leader. *Beyond Instructional Leadership*, 59(8), 16-21.
- Geroy, G. D., Bray, A., & Venneberg, D. L. (2005). The CCM model: A management approach to performance optimization. *Performance Improvement Quarterly*, 18(2), 19-37.
- Glazerman, S., Isenberg, E., Dolfin, S., Bleeker, M., Johnson, A., Grider, M., & Jacobus, M. (2010). *Impacts of comprehensive teacher induction: Final results from a randomized controlled study* (NCEE 2010-4027). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.
- Golafshani, N. (2003). Understanding reliability and validity in qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report*, 8(4), 597-607.
- Gopee, N. (2007). *Mentoring and supervision in healthcare*. New York: Sage Publications.
- Gray, C., Fry, B., Bottoms, G., & O'Neill, K. (2007). *Good principals aren't born - they're mentored: Are we investing enough to get the school leaders we need?* Southern Regional Education Board. Retrieved March 11, 2015, from <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/school-leadership/principal-training/Documents/Good-Principals-Arent-Born-Theyre-Mentored.pdf>
- Griffin, C. (2004). *The advantages and limitations of qualitative research in psychology and education*. Retrieved April 12, 2015, from http://www.pseve.org/Annals_el/UPLOAD/griffin2.pdf
- Grillo, M., & Kim, H. K. (2015). *A strategic approach to onboarding design: Surveys, materials, and diverse hires*. Retrieved April 11, 2014, from <http://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1085&context=student>
- Halgas, J. T. L., & Stoner, M. R. (2007). Partnership in practice: Fostering a mentoring relationship to meet the challenges of a large legal environment of business class. *Journal of Legal Studies Education*, 24(1), 109-127. Retrieved December 23, 2014, from <http://ezproxy.gardner-webb.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.gardner-webb.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ901671&site=ehost-live>; <http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.gardner-webb.edu/10.1111/j.1744-1722.2007.00035.x>

- Hamlin, R. G., & Sage, L. (2011). Behavioural criteria of perceived mentoring effectiveness: An empirical study of effective and ineffective mentor and mentee behaviour within formal mentoring relationships. *Journal of European Industrial Training*, 35(8), 752-778.
- Hammersley, M. (2013). *What is qualitative research?* London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.
- Hargreaves, A. (2009). Leadership succession and sustainable improvement. *School Administrator*, 66(11), 10-15. Retrieved May 23, 2014, from <http://ezproxy.gardner-webb.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.gardner-webb.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ868947&site=ehost-live;http://www.aasa.org.ezproxy.gardner-webb.edu/SchoolAdministratorArticle.aspx?id=10134>
- Hargreaves, A., & Fink, D. (2004). The seven principles of sustainable leadership. *Educational Leadership*, 61(7), 8-13. Retrieved April 5, 2015, from <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/apr04/vol61/num07/The-Seven-Principles-of-Sustainable-Leadership.aspx>
- Hatch, J.A. (2002). *Doing qualitative research in education settings*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- The Hechinger Report. (2011). Why school leadership matters. Retrieved March 2, 2015, from <http://hechingerreport.org/why-school-leadership-matters/>
- Hernandez, R., Roberts, M., & Menchaca, V. (2012). Redesigning a principal preparation program: A continuous improvement model. *International Journal of Educational Leadership Preparation*, 7(3).
- Hess, F., & Kelly, A. (2007). *Learning to lead? What gets taught in principal preparation programs*. Retrieved April 9, 2016, from http://www.hks.harvard.edu/pepg/PDF/Papers/Hess_Kelly_Learning_to_Lead_PE_PG05.02.pdf
- Hidden Curriculum. (2014). *The glossary of education reform*. Retrieved January 20, 2015, from <http://edglossary.org/hidden-curriculum>
- Hopkins-Thompson, P. A. (2000). Colleagues helping colleagues: Mentoring and coaching. *NASSP Bulletin*, 84(617), 29-35.
- Hussar, W. J., & Bailey, T. M. (2013). *Projections of education statistics to 2021* (NCES 2013-008). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Johnson, R., & Christensen, L. (2012). *Educational research: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

- Johnson-Taylor, C., & Martin, M. B. (2007). Next in line: Preparing assistant principals for the principalship. *Principal Leadership*, 7(8), 22-25.
- Joppe, M. (2000). *The research process*. Retrieved July 29, 2015, from <http://www.ryerson.ca/~mjoppe/rp.htm>
- Kaiser, S. (2006). *An examination of new employee orientation and training programs in relation to employee retention rates*. Retrieved July 28, 2015, from <http://www2.uwstout.edu/content/lib/thesis/2006/2006kaisers.pdf>
- Kotter, J. (2001). *What leaders really do*. Retrieved April 4, 2015, from <http://ag.udel.edu/longwoodgrad/symposium/2014/pdf/What%20Leaders%20Really%20Do.pdf>
- Kraus, C. (1996). *Administrative training: What really prepares administrators for the job?* Retrieved January 22, 2015, from <http://files.eric.gov/fulltext/ED396447.pdf>
- Leithwood, K., & Riehl, C. (2003). *What we know about successful school leadership*. Philadelphia, PA: Laboratory for Student Success, Temple University.
- Leithwood, K., Seashore Louis, K., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K. (2004). *How leadership influences student learning*. New York: The Wallace Foundation. Retrieved July 20, 2014, from <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/school-leadership/key-research/Documents/How-Leadership-Influences-Student-Learning.pdf>
- Leithwood, K., Day, C., Sammons, P., Harris, A., & Hopkins, D. (2006). *Successful school leadership: What it is and how it influences pupil learning*. National College for School Leadership. Retrieved August 12, 2014, from http://illinoischoolleader.org/research_compendium/documents/successful_school_leadership.pdf
- Mack, N., Woodsong, C., MacQueen, K. M., Guest, G., & Namey, E. (2005). *Qualitative research methods: A data collector's field guide*. Research Triangle Park: Family Health International.
- Malone, R. (2001). *Principal mentoring*. (Eric Document Reproduction Service No. 457535).
- Margo, M. (2002). *Beyond the myths and magic of mentoring: How to facilitate an effective mentoring process*. Google ebook: John Wiley & Sons.
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. (2011). *Designing qualitative research*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications, Inc.

- Marzano, R. J., Waters, T., & McNulty, B. A. (2005). *School leadership that works: From research to results*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Mathison, S. (1988). Why triangulate? *Educational Researcher*, 17(2), 13-17.
- Maxwell, L. (2015). Report summary: Do principals have an impossible job? *Education Week*, 34(18), 2.
- Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study application in education: Revised and expanded from case study research in education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Mills, D. Q. (2005). *Leadership: How to lead, how to live*. Waltham, MA: MindEdge Press.
- Minter, R. L., & Edwards, G. T. (2000). Employee development through coaching, mentoring, and counseling: A multidimensional approach. *Review of Business*, 21(2), 43-48.
- Mitchell, C. (2015). Maryland grooms assistant principals to take schools' top jobs. *Education Week*, 34(18), 6-8.
- Mitgang, L. (2003). Beyond the pipeline: Getting the principals we need, where they are needed most. Wallace Foundation. Retrieved March 30, 2016, from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED482826.pdf>
- Morgan, G. (1994). *Empowering human resources*. In C. Riches & CC. Morgan (EDs), *Human resource management in education* (pp. 32-41). Buckingham, England: Open University Press.
- North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Initiative. (2014). Retrieved April 15, 2015, from <http://www.ncteachingconditions.org/results/report/148/62124>
- Oleszewski, A., Shoho, A., & Barnett, B. (2012). The development of assistant principals: A literature review. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 50(3), 264-286.
- Orr, M. (2007). *How preparation influences school leaders and their school improvement: Comparing exemplary and conventionally prepared principals*. Retrieved November 2, 2014, from <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED533669>
- Palermo, J. (2004). *Alone in the hot seat: Mentoring novice assistant principals* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved March 23, 2014, from <http://www.lib.ncsu.edu/resolver/1840.16/4844>

- Pollock, K., Wang, F., & Hauseman, C. (2014). *The changing nature of principals' work*. London, ON: The University of Western Ontario.
- Pont, B., Nusche, D., & Moorman, H. (2008). Improving school leadership, Volume 1: Policy and practice. *Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development*. Retrieved April 7, 2015, from <http://www.oecd.org/education/school/44374889.pdf>
- Prothero, A. (2015). For principals, continuous learning critical to career success: Push for quality professional development gaining traction. *Education Week*, 34(18), 10-11.
- Public Agenda. (2009). *Retaining teacher talent survey of teachers: Full survey data*. New York: Author. Retrieved June 20, 2014, from <http://www.learningpt.org/expertise/educatorquality/genY/FullSurveyData.pdf>
- Punch, K. (2014). *Introduction to social research: Quantitative and qualitative approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Rawlins, M. E., & Rawlins, L. (1983). Mentoring and networking for helping professionals. *Personnel and Guidance Journal*, 62, 116-118.
- Reed, C. J., & Llanes, J. R. (2010). Raising standards for tomorrow's principals: Negotiating state requirements, faculty interests, district needs, and best practices. *Journal of Research on Leadership Education*, 5(12.3), 391-417.
- Remy, L. M. (2009). *Administrative mentoring: An investigation of practicing principals' perceptions of the role mentors played in their professional development and job satisfaction*. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved March 20, 2014, from <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED531494>
- Riddick, F. (2009). *What is your bench strength? An exploration of succession planning in three large school districts in a southeastern state* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved March 20, 2014, from <http://repository.lib.ncsu.edu/ir/bitstream/1840.16/4399/1/etd.pdf>
- Robertson, J. (2004). *Coaching leaders: The path to improvement*. New Zealand Educational Administration and Leadership Society. Retrieved May, 1, 2015, from <http://www.educationalleaders.govt.nz/Leadership-development/Professional-information/Considering-principalship/Mentoring-and-coaching/Coaching-leaders>
- Roza, M. (2003). *A matter of definition: Is there truly a shortage of school principals?* Washington University, Seattle Center on Reinventing, Public Education. Retrieved August 12, 2014, from <http://ezproxy.gardner-webb.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.gardner-webb.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=ED477647&site=ehost-live>

- Savage, H., Karp, R., & Logue, R. (2004). Faculty mentorship at colleges and universities. *College Teaching*, 52(1), 21-24.
- Southern Regional Education Board. (2008). *Learning-centered leadership program*. Retrieved August 19, 2015, from <http://www.sreb.org/learning-centered-leadership-program>
- Spillett, M. A. (2003). Peer debriefing: Who, what, when, why, how. *Academic Exchange Quarterly*, 7, 2529-2532.
- Strategies for Improving Advising and Mentoring of Graduate and Professional Students. (2010). Retrieved July 13, 2015, from <http://www.sos.umn.edu/assets/pdf/advising/Strategies-Orientation%20Planing%20Guide.pdf>
- Superville, D. (2015). Building a principal from start to finish. *Education Week*, 34(18).
- Thomas, T., & Thomas, J. (2010). *Mentoring coaching and counseling: Toward a common understanding*. Fort Leavenworth: United States Army Command and General Staff College.
- Turban, D. B., & Lee, F. K. (2007). The role of personality in mentoring relationships: Formation, dynamics and outcomes. In B. Ragins & K. Kram (Eds.), *The handbook of mentoring at work: Theory, research, and practice* (pp. 21-50). Los Angeles: Sage Publications.
- Wallace Foundation. (2007). *Getting principal mentoring right: lessons from the field*. (A Wallace "Perspective" Report). Retrieved April 11, 2016, from <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/school-leadership/principal-training/Documents/Getting-Principal-Mentoring-Right.pdf>
- Whitaker, T. (2003). *What great principals do differently: Fifteen things that matter the most*. Larchmont, New York: Eye on Education.
- White, B., & Agarwal, P. (2011). The principal report: The state of school leadership in Illinois. *Illinois Education Research Council*. Retrieved April 7, 2015, from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED531253.pdf>
- Williams, J. (2011). *Perceptions of mentoring for new secondary assistant principals*. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved April 11, 2014, from <http://pqdtopen.proquest.com/doc/887798213.html?FMT=AI>
- Wilson, C. (2010). *The differences between coaches and its related fields*. Retrieved July 28, 2015, from <http://www.performancecoachtraining.com>

- Wimpleberg, R., Teddlie, C., & Stringfield, S. (1989). Sensitivity to context: The past and future of effective schools research. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 25(1), 82-107.
- Yirci, R., & Kocabas, I. (2010). The importance of mentoring for school principals: A conceptual analysis. *Education Leadership Review*, 11(1), 1-7.
- Yoon, H. (2009). *Building and sustaining effective school leadership through principal mentoring in an urban school context*. (Doctoral Dissertation). Retrieved August 1, 2015, from <http://digitallibrary.usc.edu/cdm/ref/collection/p15799coll127/id/569798>
- Yukl, G. (1994). *Leadership in organizations* (3rd ed.). NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Yukl, G. (2006). *Leadership in organizations* (6th ed.). NJ: Pearson Education.
- Zellner, L., & Erlandson, D. (1997). Leadership laboratories: Professional development for the 21st century. *NASSP Bulletin*, 81(585), 45-50.
- Zellner, L., Skrla, L., & Erlandson, D. (2001). *The art of mentoring principals*. Connections, 3. Retrieved August 16, 2014, from <http://www.nassp.org/portals/0/content/48348.pdf>
- Zellner, L., Ward, S. M., McNamara, P., Gideon, B., Camacho, S., & Edgewood, S. D. (2002). *The loneliest job in town: Sculpting the recruitment and retention of the principal*. Retrieved August 16, 2014, from <http://ezproxy.gardner-webb.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com>. ezproxy.gardner-webb.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=ED468348&site=ehost-live
- Zenger, J., Folkman, J., Sherwin, R., & Steel, B. (2012). *How to be exceptional: Drive leadership success by magnifying your strengths*. NY: McGraw-Hill.

Appendix A

District and Participant Consent Forms

Date

District Contact

Contact Position

Name of District

RE: Permission to Conduct Research Study

District Contact:

I am writing to request permission to conduct a research study in Johnston County Schools. I am currently enrolled in the Educational Leadership Doctoral Program at Gardner-Webb University, located in Boiling Springs, N.C., and I am in the process of writing my dissertation. The study is entitled, *Hit the Floor Running: Assistant Principal Mentoring and Perceptions of Impact for Mentors and Protégés*.

This study seeks to determine the perception of impact for those involved in a formal assistant principal mentoring program. Your LEA was identified as having a program in place for new assistant principals and if approved, the following research design will be employed:

- Protégés and mentors will receive an invitation (consent to participate) with information regarding the research study and instructions on how to participate
- Participants will receive an electronic questionnaire which should take no more than 10 minutes to complete
- Participants may be invited to participate in a focus group
- Participants will be invited to participate in individual interviews
- Interactions between mentors and protégés will be informally documented through the researcher's field notes
- Central-service coordinators or directors involved in the program will be contacted to acquire additional information

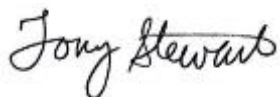
There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this research and there are no direct benefits to participants. However, participation in this study will contribute to the understanding of formal mentoring programs and may guide future efforts in the development of effective mentor programs for school leaders, particularly assistant principals. Participation in this study is confidential and voluntary. Email addresses of respondents will not be collected and individual results will be assigned a randomly generated code to ensure anonymity. All data records for this study will be stored electronically and deleted after the study is completed. Published results from this study

will not include any individual responses or any other information that can be used to identify participants. All results will be reported as group data.

Your approval to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated. If you should have any questions regarding this research project, you can contact me by email at XXXXXX or at XXXXXX. Any additional questions about the rights of human subjects can be answered by the chair of my doctoral committee, Dr. Kathi Gibson (XXXXX), or by the Chair of the Gardner-Webb University Institutional Review Board, Dr. Ivelina Naydenova (XXXXX).

If in agreement, kindly sign below, scan the letter, and email to XXXXX. Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,



Tony Stewart
Gardner-Webb University

cc: Kathy Gibson, Ph.D.
Dissertation Chair

District Contact
Contact Position
Name of District

Date

**Consent Form
for Participation in Human Research
at Gardner-Webb University**

Hit the Floor Running: Assistant Principal Mentoring
and Perceptions of Impact for Mentors and Protégés

XXXXX

You are being asked to participate in a research study to investigate perceptions of your mentoring experiences as a **new assistant principal**. You were identified by your LEA Central Service Division as having participated in your district's mentor program. The knowledge gained from this study may assist by increasing the understanding of how to effectively prepare assistant principals for school leadership roles. Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you agree to participate you will be asked to answer fifty one questions about your experience as a participant in a formal mentor program. The time required for completing the questionnaire questions should take approximately 10-15 minutes. You can choose to not answer any questions you do not want to answer and/or you can stop answering questions at any time and exit the questionnaire. You may also be asked to participate in a focus group and/or participate in an individual interview.

There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this research and there are no direct benefits to you as a participant. However, your participation in this study will contribute the understanding of formal mentoring programs and may guide future efforts to guide the development of effective mentor programs for school leaders, particularly assistant principals. Your participation in this study is confidential. Email addresses of respondents will not be collected and individual results will be assigned a randomly generated code to ensure anonymity. All data records for this study will be stored electronically and deleted after the study is completed. Published results from this

study will not include any individual responses or any other information that can be used to identify participants. All results from this will be reported as group data. If you should have any questions regarding this research project, you can contact me, Tony Stewart by email at XXXXXXXXXXXXX. Any additional questions about the rights of human subjects can be answered by the chair of my doctoral committee, Dr. Kathi Gibson (XXXXXXXXXX). Additional questions about the rights of human subjects can be answered by the Chair of the Gardner-Webb University Institutional Review Board, Dr. Ivelina Naydenova (XXXXXXXXXX).

AUTHORIZATION: I have read the above and understand the discomforts, inconvenience and risk of this study. I agree to participate in this research. I understand that I may later refuse to participate, and that I may withdraw from the study at any time. Please feel free to print a copy of this consent form for your own records.

Participant Signature

Date

Researcher Signature

Date

**Consent Form for Participation in Human Research
at Gardner-Webb University**

Hit the Floor Running: Assistant Principal Mentoring
and Perceptions of Impact for Mentors and Protégés

XXXXX

You are being asked to participate in a research study to investigate perceptions of mentoring experiences for **mentors** of new school assistant principals. You were identified by your LEA Central Service Division as having participated in your district's mentor program. The knowledge gained from this study may assist by increasing the understanding of how to effectively prepare assistant principals for school leadership roles. Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you agree to participate you will be asked to answer eighteen questions about your experience as a participant in a formal mentor program. The time required for completing the questionnaire questions should take approximately 5-10 minutes. You can choose to not answer any questions you do not want to answer and/or you can stop answering questions at any time and exit the questionnaire. You may also be asked to participate in a focus group and/or participate in an individual interview.

There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this research and there are no direct benefits to you as a participant. However, your participation in this study will contribute the understanding of formal mentoring programs and may guide future efforts to guide the development of effective mentor programs for school leaders, particularly assistant principals. Your participation in this study is confidential. Email addresses of respondents will not be collected and individual results will be assigned a randomly generated code to ensure anonymity. All data records for this study will be stored electronically and deleted after the study is completed. Published results from this

study will not include any individual responses or any other information that can be used to identify participants. All results from this will be reported as group data. If you should have any questions regarding this research project, you can contact me, Tony Stewart by email at XXXXXXXX. Any additional questions about the rights of human subjects can be answered by the chair of my doctoral committee, Dr. Kathi Gibson (XXXX). Additional questions about the rights of human subjects can be answered by the Chair of the Gardner-Webb University Institutional Review Board, Dr. Ivelina Naydenova (XXXXX).

AUTHORIZATION: I have read the above and understand the discomforts, inconvenience and risk of this study. I agree to participate in this research. I understand that I may later refuse to participate, and that I may withdraw from the study at any time. Please feel free to print a copy of this consent form for your own records.

Participant Signature

Date

Researcher Signature

Date

Appendix B

Participant Questionnaire Letter

Letter to Participants (protégé)

As a doctoral student in educational leadership at Gardner-Webb University, I am conducting research on assistant principal mentoring and the perception of impact for mentors and protégés. The title of this research study is “Hit the Floor Running: Assistant Principal Mentoring and Perceptions of Impact for Mentors and Protégé”. I serve as the Professional Development Director for Johnston County Schools, located in Smithfield, North Carolina, and coordinate the district’s Assistant Principal Institute. This program includes induction, mentoring, and other professional development for the full cadre of Assistant Principals.

Research questions for the study:

1. What perception of value or impact exists for the protégé when participating in a formal assistant principal mentoring program?
 - a. Does the relationship between the mentor and mentee have the capacity to cause harm to the protégé?
 - b. What factors might affect the protégé’s perception of a mentor-mentee relationship?
2. What perception of value or impact exists for the mentor participating in a formal assistant principal mentoring program?
 - a. Does the relationship between the mentor and mentee have the capacity to cause harm to the mentor?
 - b. What factors might affect the mentor’s perception of a mentor-mentee relationship?

In order to address the research questions, the following questionnaire has been developed to collect information about the perception of impact for mentors and

protégé's when they participate in a formal mentoring program sponsored by their school district.

First, please take a moment to complete the demographics section of the survey in Part 1. Then, read each question in Part 2 and respond by indicating the level of your agreement in regards to your Mentoring Interaction. The survey should take no more than 10-15 minutes to complete. Please click submit at the bottom of the screen when you have answered each item. Thank you for participating in this study.



Tony Stewart
Doctoral Student
Gardner-Webb University

Letter to Participants (mentor)

As a doctoral student in educational leadership at Gardner-Webb University, I am conducting research on assistant principal mentoring and the perception of impact for mentors and protégés. The title of this research study is “Hit the Floor Running: Assistant Principal Mentoring and Perceptions of Impact for Mentors and Protégé”. I also serve as the Professional Development Director for Johnston County Schools, located in Smithfield, North Carolina, and coordinate the district’s Assistant Principal Institute. This program includes induction, mentoring, and other professional development for the full cadre of Assistant Principals.

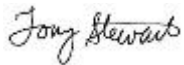
Research questions for the study:

1. What perception of value or impact exists for the protégé when participating in a formal assistant principal mentoring program?
 - a. Does the relationship between the mentor and mentee have the capacity to cause harm to the protégé?
 - b. What factors might affect the protégé’s perception of a mentor-mentee relationship?
2. What perception of value or impact exists for the mentor participating in a formal assistant principal mentoring program?
 - a. Does the relationship between the mentor and mentee have the capacity to cause harm to the mentor?
 - b. What factors might affect the mentor’s perception of a mentor-mentee relationship?

In order to address the research questions, the following questionnaire has been developed to collect information about the perception of impact for mentors and

protégé's when they participate in a formal mentoring program sponsored by their school district.

First, please respond to the five open-ended items in Part 1, Background Information. Then, read each question regarding Mentor Commitment and Program Understanding in Part 2. Respond to these items by indicating the level of your agreement for each. Finally, read and respond to each of the remaining items regarding Program Characteristics in Part 3. The survey should take no more than 10-15 minutes to complete. Please click submit at the bottom of the screen when you have answered each item. Thank you for participating in this study.



Tony Stewart
Doctoral Student
Gardner-Webb University

Appendix C
Protégé Survey Instruments

Assistant Principal Mentoring Perception of Impact Survey for Protégés

PART 2 - Mentoring Interaction

Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements by selecting the following indicators that best describes your opinion for each question:

Survey Item	Rating Indicators				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
8. My mentor has been helpful to me.					
9. I feel supported by my mentor.					
10. I have developed a close, personal relationship with my mentor.					
11. I feel that I can talk about any issue or concern with my mentor.					
12. I trust my mentor not to violate my confidentiality.					
13. Having a mentor has made my job easier.					
14. I have found support outside of the formal mentoring program.					
15. Time is a barrier to the mentoring program.					
16. Proximity is a barrier to the mentoring relationship.					

17. Communication with my mentor has occurred through: (Check any that apply)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Structured meetings | <input type="checkbox"/> Additional meetings we have scheduled |
| <input type="checkbox"/> E-mail | <input type="checkbox"/> Phone (Work and/or Mobile) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Google Plus) | <input type="checkbox"/> School visits |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (explain): |

Protégé Questionnaire

Part 4: Rate Your Mentor

18. Please indicate which one of the following best describes your mentor:

5 - I feel strongly that my mentor assisted me in the development of the skills necessary to perform my job.

4 - I feel that my mentor assisted me somewhat in the development of the skills necessary to perform my job.

3 - I feel neutral that my mentor assisted me in the development of the skills necessary to perform my job.

2 - I feel that my mentor rarely assisted me in the development of the skills necessary to perform my job.

1 - I feel that my mentor never assisted me in the development of the skills necessary to perform my job.

Optional: You may add comments related to your rating of the person who mentored you by writing your comments below:

Part 5: Perceptions of Preparedness

Please indicate your perception of preparedness for the position in which you are currently serving by choosing the most appropriate response for each item:

1- Strongly Disagree, 2 - Disagree, 3 - Neutral, 4 - Agree, 5 - Strongly Agree

19. I feel qualified to provide professional development activities in my current position.

20. I feel qualified to administer student discipline activities in my current position.

21. I feel qualified to supervise classroom instruction in my current position.

22. I feel qualified to present the school's vision to parents and community members in my current position.

23. I look forward to coming to work.

Part 6: Mentor Provided Support for Identified Skill Areas

Please select the indicator that best describes the support that your mentor provided to help you develop the skill listed.

1 - Strongly Disagree, 2 - Disagree, 3 - Neutral, 4 - Agree, 5 - Strongly Agree

A. Providing Professional Development:

- 24. Mentoring helped me foster a community of learners where adults continually learn.
- 25. Mentoring helped me develop skills to analyze data with staff.
- 26. Mentoring helped me to connect professional development to school learning goals.
- 27. Mentoring guided me to provide up-to-date technology training.
- 28. Mentoring assisted me in locating resources (time, opportunity, and funding) for providing professional development.

B. Student Discipline

- 29. Mentoring assisted me in creating a school environment that is conducive to student learning.
- 30. Mentoring assisted me in determining fair consequences for students who commit non-suspendable infractions of the school's/district's rules.
- 31. Mentoring assisted me in responding to major disciplinary issues (possession or under the influence of drugs, or fighting, or stealing).
- 32. My mentor taught me strategies for facilitating difficult conversations with teachers related to student discipline.

C. Classroom Instruction

- 33. Mentoring helped me learn to observe classroom practices that support active learning.
- 34. Working with my mentor strengthened my skills in using data to offer advice to teachers in planning instruction.
- 35. My mentor helped me identify and address barriers to student learning.
- 36. My mentor helped me navigate the district's teacher evaluation process.

37. Working with my mentor, I gained the confidence to offer teachers specific advice related to instructional strategies.

D. Content Standards and Curriculum

38. Through the mentoring process, I gained the skills to analyze student work using the content standards.

39. My mentor supported me in using data to measure student performance.

40. Through the mentoring process, I learned to tie daily operations of the school to student learning goals.

E. Parents and Community Members

41. My mentor supported me in getting parents to become involved in the school.

42. Through the mentoring process, I learned to engage the community in the school's activities.

43. Through working with my mentor, I learned to establish partnerships with community groups that support school goals.

44. My mentor advised me about developing positive relationships with parents.

F. Staff

45. Through the mentoring process, I learned to share decision making.

46. My mentor advised me in prioritizing issues to address with staff members.

47. My mentor helped me work through potentially difficult personnel matters.

G. Dynamics and/or Politics of District Issues

48. Through working with my mentor, I learned to seek leadership opportunities from multiple sources.

49. My mentor helped me to prioritize resources to meet the school goals.

50. My mentor helped me to understand the political nature of working in a school district.

51. My mentor assisted me in identifying the key leaders on my school campus.

Appendix D

Mentor Survey Instruments

Assistant Principal Mentor Survey

PART 1 - Background Information

1. How did the mentor training prepare you for your role as a mentor?
2. Do you feel that the training provided you with the knowledge and tools to support your protégé? In what ways?
3. What organizational structures (such as time, documents, etc.) support the implementation of the mentor model?
4. Please describe the relationship between you and your protégé.
5. How does that relationship impact meeting the goals of the protégés?

PART 2 - Mentor Commitment and Program Understanding

Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements by selecting the following indicators that best describes your opinion for each question:

Survey Item	Rating Indicators				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
Mentor Commitment					
6. I was committed to developing an effective and productive mentoring relationship.					
7. I often felt that I did not have enough time to devote to the mentoring my protégé.					
8. I felt that my protégé was sometimes a burden to me.					
9. I made the development of our mentorship a priority.					

Program Understanding					
10. I understood the purpose of the mentoring program.					
11. I understood my responsibilities as a mentor in the mentoring program.					
12. I understood what was expected of me as a mentor.					
13. I was counseled on how to get the most out of my mentoring relationship.					

PART 3 - Program Characteristics

14. My participation in the program voluntary?

☐ Yes ☐ No

15. How much input did you have into determining your protégé?

☐ None ☐ Very little ☐ Moderate amount ☐ Great deal

16. Please choose one of the following statements which best describes how your mentor-protégé match was determined.

- ☐ My protégé selected me.
☐ I selected my protégé.
☐ My protégé and I selected each other.
☐ My protégé and I were randomly assigned.
☐ My protégé and I were assigned to each other through a pre-screening process.
☐ I am not sure.

17. Did you receive training or an orientation about your role and responsibilities as a mentor prior to the participating as a mentor?

☐ Yes ☐ No

18. How would you rate the quality of your training?

☐ Excellent ☐ Very Good ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Poor

Appendix E

Mentor and Protégé Focus Group Questions

Assistant Principal Protégé Focus Group Questions

1. What were some of your positive experiences with?
 - A. communication
 - B. relationships
 - C. time
 - D. topics
 - E. reflection
2. Was there an impact on your performance as a result of participating in the mentoring program? If so, what were they?
3. What are some of the barriers you encountered?
*Be sure to discuss matching of the mentor/mentee (geography, grade level, etc).
4. Discuss some of the advantages of including time during prescribed meetings. What about disadvantages?
5. Would there be any benefit for having a Blog or Discussion Board available for Mentors and/or Mentees? What about an electronic “spot” for documents, articles, PD, suggestions?
6. What support or PD would have been beneficial throughout the year?
7. How important is 2nd or 3rd year support to you?
8. What other components of a Mentoring Program would you like to see?

Assistant Principal Mentor Focus Group Questions

1. What were some of your positive experiences with?
 - A. communication
 - B. relationships
 - C. time
 - D. topics
 - E. reflection
2. Were there any benefits for you as a Mentor? If so, what were they?
3. What are some of the barriers you encountered?
Be sure to discuss matching of the mentor/mentee (geography, grade level, etc).
4. Would there be any benefit for having a Blog or Discussion Board available for Mentors and/or Mentees? What about an electronic “spot” for documents, articles, PD, suggestions?
5. What support or PD would have been beneficial throughout the year?
6. What information/material during the training should be revised/added?

Appendix F

Participant Structured Interview Items

**Structured Interview Questions for (P)rotégés, (M)entors,
and (D)irector of Mentoring Program**

1. Describe how you feel/felt in your new role as a first year assistant principal. (P,M)
2. Describe advantages or disadvantages of mentoring. (P, M, D)
3. Describe what you feel would be a perfect mentoring relationship. (P, M, D)
4. How has the mentoring program affected your views of what assistant principal's should be doing? (P, M, D)
5. What are the biggest strengths of the program? (P, M, D)
6. What activities of the mentoring program do you believe to be the least helpful? (P, M, D)
7. What could be done to strengthen the mentoring program (i.e. how could the program be changed to make it even better)? (P, M, D)
8. How has the mentoring program better prepared you/assistant principal(s) for the job? (P, M, D)
9. What mentoring strategies did you perceive to be most effective in developing skills in the following? (P, M, D)
 - a. Professional Development
 - b. Student Discipline
 - c. Classroom Instruction
 - d. Content Standards and Curriculum
 - e. Parents and Community Members
 - f. Working with and Supervising Staff
 - g. Dynamics and/or Politics of District Issues
10. Is there anything else you would like to share with me regarding how mentoring helped you gain skills to be a strong school leader? (P, M)

Appendix G

IRB Approval



THE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
of
GARDNER-WEBB UNIVERSITY

This is to certify that the research project titled

Hit the Floor Running: Assistant Principal Mentoring and Perceptions of Impact for Mentors and Protégés

being conducted by Anthony Lee Stewart

has received approval by the Gardner-Webb University IRB. Date: September 1, 2015

Exempt Research

Signed

[Signature]
Department/School/Program IRB Representative

[Signature]
Department/School/Program IRB Member

Expedited Research

Signed

Department/School/Program IRB Representative

Department/School/Program IRB Member

IRB Administrator or Chair or Institutional Office

Non-Exempt (Full Review)

Signed

IRB Administrator

IRB Chair

IRB Institutional Officer

Expiration Date _____

IRB approval

√ Exempt _____ Expedited _____ Non-Exempt (Full Review)